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The Icelandic Canadian

Vol. 10

Winnipeg, Man., Spring 1952

No. 3

Her Majesty



Queen Elizabeth II

by the Grace of God,
Queen of Canada, and of all her
other realms and territories,
Head of the Commonwealth,
Defender of the Faith,
and Sovereign of the most Noble
Order of the Garter.

The people of the British Commonwealth of Nations hail their gracious Queen, who by training and temperament is so well fitted for the exalted position she has now assumed. By her grace and charm she has endeared herself to all the people of her realm.

In Memoriam



His Late Majesty King George VI

by the Grace of God,
of Great Britain, Ireland and the
British Dominions Beyond the Seas,
King, Defender of the Faith and
Sovereign of the most noble
Order of the Garter

The passing of His Majesty, February 6, 1952, marks the end of the reign of a wise and gracious ruler. His indomitable courage and stout heart in a period of unprecedented stress and critical upheaval will long be remembered by all the freedom loving peoples of the world.

A Tribute to **The Late Honorable Sveinn Björnsson** **PRESIDENT OF ICELAND**

The Honorable Sveinn Björnsson, President of the Republic of Iceland passed away in the early morning hours of January 25th 1952, at a Reykjavik hospital. He was seventy years of age. His health had been precarious for quite some time, but the immediate cause of death is said to have been coronary thrombosis.

The Premier, Steingrímur Steinþórsson announced the death of the President over the national radio about noon on that same day. In paying tribute to the deceased leader, he said in part: "The Icelandic nation will always remember its able, kind hearted and charming President with reverence and gratitude, and will duly appreciate his labors on behalf of the country and the nation both during the long time he served as ambassador abroad, and as he moulded the policy and character of the young Republic as its first President."

The late President was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, on February 27th 1881. His father was the nationally known Björn Jónsson, editor of "Ísafold", one of the leading political organs of that day, and later Prime Minister of Iceland, and his wife, Elisabeth, daughter of the renowned and scholarly Dean of the Staðarstað Parish, the Reverend Sveinn Nielsson.

He graduated in law from the University of Copenhagen in 1907, and thereafter acted as Supreme Court attorney in Reykjavik until 1920. During most of this time he was also a member of Parliament (Althing) and sponsored many useful projects, the most notable of which is undoubtedly the Icelandic Steamship Co.



In 1920 he was appointed the first ambassador of the then independent State of Iceland, to Denmark. This office he held for almost twenty years, or until he was called back to Iceland to assist the Icelandic administration, particularly the Department of foreign affairs, during the German occupation of Denmark.

On June 17th 1941 the Icelandic Althing elected him the Governor of Iceland, to which office he was re-elected annually, until on June 17th 1944, when at the establishment of the Republic of Iceland he was elected its first President. He was twice elected to this office, without opposition. This was the greatest tribute his nation could pay him, and it shows better than anything else the great popularity which he enjoyed among his people.

President Björnsson was a gentle-

man of great culture, endowed with wide sympathies and a broad understanding of men and matters. While brought up and trained in the traditional European atmosphere, he was a sincere admirer of many things in the Western World. Many of the western Icelanders while touring Iceland, enjoyed the genuine hospitality of the Presidential Mansion of Bessastaðir during his terms of office. One of his first acts as President of Iceland, was to send a recorded greeting to his kinsmen in North America, in which he said in part: "It warms our hearts, here at home to hear of the accomplishments of many of you . . . by this you have enhanced the good name

of Iceland. We now look upon your emigration to America from an entirely different point of view than was formerly done. You are still, indirectly working for Iceland, . . . you have even helped us here in the homeland to increase our appreciation of our own heritage. Your history is still, to some considerable extent, the history of Iceland, and the writing thereof is still not finished. Let us all unite in writing it worthily, and beautifully."

People of Icelandic extraction everywhere share a sense of loss in the passing of this great and good man, and extend the most sincere sympathy to the Icelandic nation which now mourns its first President. **V. J. E.**

Prof. Finnbogi Gudmundsson Welcomed

The evening of December 10, the Icelandic community of Winnipeg and visitors from other districts gathered together in the First Lutheran Church to welcome Finnbogi Gudmundsson, the newly appointed professor of the Department of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba.

Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, chairman of the Foundation committee, presided and Prof. Gudmundsson was introduced by Dr. A. H. S. Gillson, president of the University. Rev. V. J. Eylands and Rev. P. M. Petursson thanked Prof. Gudmundsson for his address, following which he had an opportunity of meeting the public, and lunch was served in the lower auditorium of the church.

In his address, referring to the newly established department of Icelandic at the university, Prof. Gudmundsson said:

"We of this University are not alone in this adventure. Icelandic is now taught in many leading universities

in the English speaking world, and interest in the Icelandic language and literature is steadily increasing particularly in Britain". He specified some instances of the work being done in this field and referred to translations of Icelandic classics into English*.

The professor brought greetings to Dr. Gillson and the University of Manitoba from the University of Iceland. He also brought greetings to the Icelanders here from individuals and officials in Iceland.

In turning his attention to the younger generation, he said:

"I place the main emphasis on the language and I refuse to believe that the young people are not able to acquire a fair knowledge of the language if they make up their minds to do so.

"There are many ways to arouse

*For the latest and most outstanding example of this work see Icelandic Canadian Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 12.

the interest in these matters. And one of them is for small groups to meet regularly for the purpose of reading and discussing the Icelandic classics. I would urge that as many as possible learn the Icelandic language, but to the others we must give instruction about Icelandic culture in the English language."

These words of Prof. Gudmundsson struck a very responsive chord in the minds and hearts of members of the Icelandic Canadian club. These points considered so important by the professor, have been embodied in the work which the club has sponsored for many years: the lecture series in English to instruct the public about Iceland's history and literature; the evening classes where large numbers of students met to learn the Icelandic language; the study groups where those interested met to read and discuss the Sagas and other Icelandic literature; and the extension work done through these classes and through the magazine in distributing Icelandic lessons and books to the far corners of this continent. The work of keeping up contacts and supplying mimeographed Icelandic language lessons and various types of printed material to the scores of persons who regularly make requests of this nature, has be-

come far too wide in scope to be successfully handled by one or two persons as a voluntary service.

It is well that a centre has now been established "from which all agencies working for the preservation of Icelandic culture on the North American continent will draw life and inspiration", as Dr. Gillson pointed out in his address March 30, when the Icelandic Chair was established. For there are groups and individuals, in various parts of this continent, eagerly waiting for planned programs and lesson helps which will aid them in preserving for themselves and their children the language "that I learned in my prayers and my catechism", as one mother of Icelandic decent put it lately when asking us to send her some lesson helps.

Since his arrival in Winnipeg Prof. Gudmundsson has visited some of the Icelandic settlements. He has given addresses to large gatherings, having been guest speaker at the Icelandic Canadian Club annual banquet January 25, at the Marlborough Hotel; the annual concert of 'Frón', local chapter of the I.N.L., at the Good Templar's Hall, Feb. 18; and at the "Betel" annual concert held in the First Lutheran Church, March 4th.

H. D.

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A CHEST OF BOOKS

By Prof. FINNBOGI GUDMUNDSSON

An address delivered at the annual banquet of the Icelandic Canadian Club held at the Marlborough Hotel, January 25.

★

When I was asked to speak to you this evening I wondered for some time what I could talk about that would fit the occasion. Was I to speak to you about the future of the Icelandic Chair at the University? And I thought, rather not. When I the other day was asked about my prophecy in regard to the Icelandic department, I answered: I am not in a position to prophesy, but I will try to make some of the hopes come true. And in that I know that you are going to help me.

But as I considered the matter further I thought of an author, a poet, even a particular book. Then finally I decided to speak to you about books in general or more precisely, a chest of books.

Let me take you back to the twelfth century and read to you a passage of the saga of the priesthood of Guðmundur the Good, which is preserved for us in Sturlunga, a collection of sagas of biographies written by different men on events in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The priest's saga was written, we presume, after the death of bishop Guðmundur, that is after 1237, and deals with his life down to the time, when he became a bishop of Holar, the northern diocese, in 1203.

The saga as a whole is not a masterpiece, but here and there in it there are some passages of a special value. One of these I am going to read to you, but first I must give you the background and introduce some of the personalities in the saga.

The saga opens with the names of Þorgeir Hallason and Hallbera Einarsdóttir, Guðmundur's grandparents. We are told that they had 10 children, 5 sons and 5 daughters. Then there are some remarks about each one of them.

Einar was the oldest son. He was childless. He died in the wastes of Greenland. There are two different accounts of how he died. The one relates that their ship was found in some uninhabited place, but the crew divided into two parties, and fought each other, for the scanty provisions that remained. From there Einar escaped with two other men and they began to make their way to the settlements. They went up on the glaciers and there they perished, a day's journey from the settlements. Their bodies were found a year later.

Þorvarður was the second son. He became a courtier of king Ingi of Norway and he and the king became close friends.

The third was Þórður, a monk at Þverá, where he died.

The fourth was Ingimundur. He was a priest and a very noble character.

Ari was the fifth son of Þorgeir. He was a huge and powerful man.

Later we are told of a woman with the name of Úlfheiður, who was married against her will. This woman fell in love with Ari and they had 4 children, one of them being Guðmundur.

Þorðvarður, the second son of Þorgeir had, as I said before, become a courtier of king Ingi, but when the king was killed, Þorðvarður returned to Iceland and said that he was not going to serve any temporal lord now that king Ingi was dead, because he

felt that the king's equal could nowhere be found. And he asked his brother Ari, that if he went to Norway, he should stay away from king Ingi's enemies, but support those who might wish to avenge him.

Ari went to Norway and did as his brother had asked him and joined earl Erlingur. In his service he made a name for himself.

Ari stayed for some time with the earl, after which he returned to Iceland. But as he was a born soldier he again sailed to Norway to serve earl Erlingur and stayed with him during the winter.

In the spring he prepared to sail to Iceland. When they were ready to go, his enemies criticized him for leaving the earl in his hour of need as a war was imminent.

When Ari heard this he took his belongings ashore and returned to the court.

But later this same year (1166) Ari was killed after having saved earl Erlingur, who had a narrow escape, when attacked suddenly by his enemies.

When Þorvarður, Ari's brother heard the news he composed an ode thinking that he could best assuage his grief by recording the brave deeds of his brother in verse that would circulate far and wide.

Now Guðmundur had lost his father at the age of 5, and as he was illegitimate he did not receive a share of his father's estate so his relatives felt they would be well advised to have him educated and leave him to his books.

The priest Ingimundur accordingly received him and as a first recompense for the loss of his father kept him close to his books.

During the ensuing years Ingimundur and his ward Guðmundur moved from place to place in Iceland, and

Guðmundur received a good education from his foster-father.

And now we come to the passage I wanted to read to you. It is translated in a lecture, which an English scholar, Sir William Paton Ker, once gave on Guðmundur the Good, later published in his *Collected Essays*. Sir William, who was very well versed in Old-Icelandic literature as well as in the whole field of medieval literature, knew and appreciated not only our old literature but also our literary achievements in later centuries. For instance he was a great admirer of Sveinbjörn Egilsson's translation of Homer and as a sign of that he had his prose translation of the *Odyssey* printed at his own expense in its second edition, where Egilsson's revised translation appeared for the first time.

But now back to the twelfth century to our saga of Guðmundur the Good. I read the translation, (with some minor changes):

"In the spring of 1180 when Guðmundur was 19, the priest Ingimundur begins to think of a voyage to Norway, and Guðmundur, his ward, with him. They took passage at Gásir (in Eyjafjörður) with Hallsteinn Hunchback, and sailed on Sunday the day before Michaelmas. The wind took them east under the Nouns to the Melrakkaslétta: then came a headwind and they drove before it and were tossed and tumbled about for a week and drifted to the Hornstrandir. One evening as they were at supper the awning tore open at the edge. A man called Asmundur, an Easterling (Norwegian), looked out and suddenly cries:

"Whish! down with the awning, up boys and clear the decks! We are on the breakers—never mind your supper this time!" Then they all jump at

once and get in the awning. Hallvarður, the mate, calls out:

"Where is the ship's chaplain?"

"Not far to look for him," says Ingimundur. "What do you want with him?"

"We want to confess," said they.

He answers: "It is no better time for confession than it was this autumn every Sunday, when I preached to you to come to confession in the name of God: and you would never hear. Now I must even pray to God to hear you, for I am no more at home on the sea than you are: be bold and keep a good heart."

They said: "Then you must make a vow along with us: a pilgrimage or some other large vow: nothing less will do."

"Nothing less," says Ingimundur, "I will vow, if I may order what the vow shall be. Or else I will give my word for every Iclander on board that not a man of them will be with you in the vowing: for I will not be under your rule now, any more than you were under mine in these last weeks on shore."

"What then wilt thou vow, priest?" said the men from Norway.

"I will vow to Almighty God and Holy Cross, to our Lady St. Mary and All Saints, to give a tithe of all that comes safe on shore to churches or poor men as the bishop shall dispose."

They answered: "Thou shall give the word, priest, for we cannot do now without thy care." Now pledges are given all over the ship to keep this vow. And by this time they are well in among the breakers. Then there is a great dispute what is best to be done, and every man wants his own way. Some are for hoisting the sail, and they begin at this. Then Hallvarður the mate asks Ingimundur if he knows the highest name of God*

He answers: "I know some names of God; and I believe what the Apostle Paul says: that there is no name higher nor holier than the name of Jesus—but what thou callest the highest name I know not."

He answers: "I do not reckon such to be priests who do not know the name of God."

Then Ingimundur calls to Hallvarður: "Dost thou know the highest name?"

"God's truth," says Hallvarður, "I scarcely think I can get my tongue to it now, and sorry for it. But Þórður Crow (kráka) will know. Þórður Crow! Canst thou name the high name?"

He says: "Worse luck, mate, it slipped my mind, but someone else is sure to know. Thorbjörn Humla will know."

"Aye, aye! well, well! Þorbjörn Humla, name the name if thou canst!"

He says: "I wish I could; but as far as I can tell, I never heard it; but I will show you a man that can, I think Einar Neep knows."

Then they tried him, and he names the name. And when they had the sail up no more than the height of a man there comes a great beam, sea breaking over the freight amid-ships and fore and aft as well. Every man was at a rope then, and Ingimundur caught hold of a boathook, and tried to bring down the sail. Guðmundur, his ward, had a berth in the ship's boat, he was standing between the boat and the sail to see the sail clear. Then comes another heavy sea over the whole ship and carries off the vane of the mast and both the bulwarks and overboard everything loose amid-ships except men; and the ship was much

*The 72 names of God are still used in perils by land or water.

knocked about and the boat as well. Then they come through the breakers and get a third sea, not so heavy as the others. Then they rushed to the bailing, fore and aft, and a piece of sail was hoisted.

Then they see land and talk it over where they might have come: some said they must be at Málmey; but Þórarinn Rosti, an Icelander, said that would be too short for all the time they had been drifting. Then Már Eyjólfsson speaks, and says he knows they are off the Hornstrandir at Skjaldabjarnarvík and said he had been there before, that summer. Then they asked him to lay them a course for a harbour, and wished to go north to Þaralátursfjörður, for there was a safe harbour there.

Then they looked about to see what damage was done, and Ingimundur comes to Guðmundur, his nephew. Now the big sea had cast him into the boat, and his right leg hung over the gunwale of the boat and was caught in the sail. Ingimundur asked, why he did not get up. And he said there was such a weight on him that he could not stir nor stand. Then the loose sail was rolled off him; but still he did not rise. Ingimundur asked why. He said his foot was so heavy he could not move it.

"The leg is broken," says Ingimundur.

"I know not," says Guðmundur. "I have no feeling in it."

Then they looked, and the leg was broken on the gunwale, the bones in slivers, and the toes pointing where the heel should be. So they put him to bed in the boat. Then Ingimundur missed his chest of books, it had gone overboard. And he was hard hit, as he thought; for there was his pleasure where his books were; and the man crippled that he loved best. Yet he

gave thanks to god and thought there had been a quick fulfilment of his dream. For the night before he had dreamt of Archbishop Eysteinn, how he came to the Archbishop and was bidden welcome. He had told the dream to Guðmundur, and Guðmundur's reading of it was that there was some "arch business" ahead for them. And that same day, before they had come to rough water. Magnús Ámundason had asked whether anyone knew of any breakers called The Humps. And he was told that there were such, namely, off the Hornstrandir.

"I dreamt," he says, "that we were near them." And a little after he had said that, they were aware of the breakers.

Now they are carried North, off Reykjarfjörður. Then they bring up and lower the sail and cast anchor, and lie at anchor there all night. In the morning they get to land with planks from the ship and cut down their mast and let drive ashore, with a line fast to the ship. Then they debated what should be done with Guðmundur. Then up speaks a man called Bersi, who went by the name of Corpse-light—one of his cheeks was coal-black—and says:

"Why should we trouble about a sick man, and his leg broken, when we have enough to do to save ourselves? Send him overboard!"

Þórarinn Rosti answers: "Hold the blasted tongue of thee! Send thee overboard thyself, and little loss! We must think of another way."

He jumps overboard at once, and Einar Neep along with him. The moving of the ship had brought her aground, and they let down Guðmundur over the side in a web of wadmál, and Þórarinn and Einar took him one on each side and he sat on

their arms with a hand about the neck of either man. And some men went behind to make some shelter from the seas. And so they made their way ashore, drawn backward by the draught of the sea, and sped onward as the new wave caught them. And they brought him to land. Then the ship canted seaward, and all that was in her went into the sea, and she broke up all to flinders and little of her freight came to land.

At that place lived a man called Snorri, son of Arngeir; he was a healer. He takes Guðmundur and brings him home with him and treats him as well as he can; his house was not a rich one, but his will was good. Many men came to the place from the neighbouring homesteads to see what they could do for them or their goods. Then Ingimundur made a vow and prayed that his book-trunk and his books might come to land. A few nights later news came that the box had come ashore at the Drangar, and everything in it that might be looked for; one hasp was holding and the other two were broken; and all the other chests that came ashore were broken and empty. Ingimundur went there to dry his books; and was there til Martinmas. Then he came back to see his ward and learn how his leg was mending."

If we look closely at this account, we will see how rich it is in many ways. We see how men travelled in those days, their reactions in the hour of peril, this mixture of comedy and tragedy, sincere belief and blasphemy, the Icelanders versus the Norwegians, the cruelty of Bersi the Corpselicht, who wants to send Guðmundur overboard, and the quick answer and brave action of Þórarinn Rosti; then when they come ashore, the hospitality of

Snorri the healer and his neighbours.

But in spite of all this there is one thing—to my mind at least— which stands out from all the rest in this account, and that is Ingimundur the priest, in the love of his books and the care he takes of Guðmundur, his ward and nephew. In him we have personified one of the best qualities of the Icelandic people throughout the centuries: their love of books and their will to educate their children.

We are told later in the saga, that when Guðmundur in the spring of 1185 was ordained a priest, Ingimundur gave him his best and most instructive books, and his priestly vestments at parting and left him, when he had become a priest and perfect in manners.

We remember Ingimundur's chest of books, when it came ashore; only one hasp was holding, the other two were broken. And if we think of the Icelandic manuscripts, how narrow an escape from destruction many of them have had, we can say that our old literature came to us in a chest where only one hasp was holding. We can call it divine providence if we like.

When the Icelanders immigrated to America in the last century they did not leave their books behind, they brought them along. And when for instance Lord Dufferin visited the Icelandic settlement of Gimli in 1877, these books struck his eye, for he says, as so often quoted: "I have not entered a single hut or cottage which did not contain, no matter how bare its walls or scanty the furniture, a library of 20 or 30 volumes."

We hear now that the older people, who have some Icelandic books do not know what is going to become of them, because the younger people do not know the language and, even if they do, are unable to fully appreciate

their value. Of course there are exceptions. But this is a serious problem. Without books and constant reading we are not going to last long.

Some people may question if we in the middle of the twentieth century, a practical age, can afford to know Icelandic as well as English. To my mind the greater question is whether we can afford to know Icelandic and not read some of its fine literature both ancient and modern.

Therefore I want to make this challenge to you: Do not throw your Icelandic books overboard, but bring

them along and read them. And that is not enough. You must add new books and increase your reading.

As you have noticed I have been directing my remarks mainly to those of you who know Icelandic, because in your case the one hasp is still holding. You have only to open the chest and read the books.

But in the case of those who do not know the language, it is not easy. For them we must do the same as Ingimundur the priest. We must make a vow to assist them and pray that they may come to land.

Arctic Island Named For Stefansson

A newly-discovered island within the Arctic Circle has been named "Stefansson Island" in honor of the great Canadian-born Arctic explorer, Dr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson. The island is 1,000 miles from the North Pole.

Announcement of the tribute was made by the Canadian board on geographical names of the Mines and Technical Surveys Department in Ottawa.

It coincided with the veteran explorer's appearance in Toronto March 3, when he began a series of Canadian Club luncheon addresses in Ontario which took him also to Hamilton, London, Port Hope, Belleville, Montreal and Ottawa.

Stefansson Island is at the tip of a peninsula forming the northeast section of Victoria Island, jutting into Melville Sound and bounded on the west by Hadley Bay and on the east by M'Clintock Channel.

The board is departing from its general practice of not naming geographical areas after living persons but this recognition of the great inter-

national fame and worth of the explorer has been planned for some time.

Only the discovery of something considered worthy of bearing his name delayed the tribute. Last year this discovery was made.

An aerial survey disclosed that the tip of the peninsula was in fact an island separated from the main finger of land by a well-defined but narrow strait. The island is about 8,000 square miles in area.

Dr. Stefansson carried on explorations in the vicinity during his 10 winters in the Arctic which have made him one of the greatest living authorities on the north.

He has published more than 20 books on the Arctic, including "The Friendly Arctic," "My Life With the Eskimos," and "Ultima Thule." He is a great advocate of the theory that Canada's far north is an "almost untapped reservoir of the earth's riches, easily and comfortably habitable with the aid of modern engineering, transportation and communications."

IN THE MORNING SUN

By SVANHILDUR ÞORSTEINSDÓTTIR

Translated from the Icelandic by Jakobina Johnson.



Svanhildur Þorsteinsdóttir

We had gone camping for the week-end. It was Sunday evening by now and Inga and I, seated on separate hummocks by the highway, awaited the bus for town.

Scattered around lay the luggage which we had carried a long distance from the campsite—sleeping-bags, tent and various housekeeping items. The whole day had been sunny. The evening was warm and beautiful. This was close to mid-summer's eve.

We sat in silence, eyes fixed on the road. "What time is it?" asked Inga. "Ten," I replied.

"Then we've been waiting more than an hour," Inga continued. "There's something wrong—I wonder if your watch is slow. I stupidly forgot mine."

"My watch usually gains," I told her. "Either the bus is far behind schedule, or—or else we've been misinformed."

"Then a bus might break down."
"Yes, such things could happen."

Now a long silence.

"We can't sit here all night," from Inga.

"No, but what to do? There's no farm-house in sight and we can't walk far with all this luggage."

Indefinite waiting, but no bus came along.

The longer we sat the more frequent were the glances we cast towards a small summer cottage at the foot of a mountain, not far away. It must be occupied, for we could see smoke from the chimney. We even thought we could distinguish an automobile at the side of the house. We should be able to get information up there about the bus, or the nearest telephone. We decided to go and carry all our belongings.

Long and weary was the climb—but finally we arrived at a neat looking, white cottage with a red roof. After repeated knocking, the door was opened. Before us stood a dark-haired gentleman, tall and slim, obviously under the influence of liquor. We apologized for our intrusion and explained our predicament. He informed us that there was no bus for town on Sunday evenings and that very few cars passed by. Our chances for a lift were therefore not promising, even if we waited by the roadside. "How far to a telephone?" I ventured. "Close to an hour's walk, and the service no doubt cut off by this time. Won't you come in? It might do you good to have something in the way of refreshments."

Just then a second gentleman appeared in the doorway. "What is this?" he said, "Why not invite these girls in? How are you, my young ladies? It had been agreed that no women should be here this evening, but since Providence has sent you to our door, it must also have ordained you should be hospitably received." The speaker was a short person and redhaired, with small, kindly eyes.

Inga said she hoped Providence would see us safely home this evening, but thanked him just the same. What should we do? Close by we saw a beautiful late model car. But even if these gentlemen had offered to take us home, we felt that neither one looked dependable. Why, then, should we accept hospitality?

We exchanged glances and declined. "But the luggage," I said. "Could we leave some of it here?" "Certainly," replied the tall one who had opened the door. "But where are you going? Do come in for a minute." "No, thank you," I told him firmly. "But where may we store our luggage?"

I had no sooner spoken than the third person appeared. He was tall and broad-shouldered, hair ashen-blond and eyes greyish blue. He showed no signs of drinking and spoke to us at once. Inga explained our dilemma. I said nothing, but sized him up. He had a pleasing smile and white teeth. He was unusually handsome.

We now learned that this was the owner of the car, that we were welcome to ride to town with him, but that he regretted he was not yet ready to leave. They had planned to stay here a little longer. He asked us please to step inside and make ourselves at home. "Thank you," I agreed cheerfully, with a glance towards Inga. She

registered surprise, to which I paid no attention and enter we did.

It was a well-appointed sittingroom, but hazy with tobacco smoke. On the tables we could distinguish bottles, glasses and loaded ash-trays.

The trio introduced themselves and we did likewise. We also came to know that the tall, dark man, an engineer, was the host. The short one with the smiling eyes was a teacher up country, a theologian by education. The third, the good-looking one and the last one to the door, was a doctor. They were school-mates and friends who had planned a jolly reunion here.

I sat down by a window looking out on the highway to watch for a possible bus or car.

"Now we open the champagne bottle," declared the handsome one. Up flew the cork and the pale-gold liquid effervesced and overflowed. The doctor offered me a glass. I noted his white and shapely hand. "To our unexpected guests," he said. "Agreed," said the teacher. "What would life be worth without the presence of beauty, the presence of woman?"

"You should get married," put in the engineer.

"Yes," came the reply; "occasionally that has entered my mind."

Champagne is wonderful. It is an elegant, cooling beverage. It gives you a light and airy feeling.

At first I glanced at the highway now and then, but soon gave up altogether. It was more pleasant to watch the doctor. Moreover, he was now sitting beside me, opening a conversation. What did we talk about? Anything between earth and heaven. Sometimes we fell silent. That, also, was enjoyable. I could not recall that I had ever met him before, yet we were like old friends whom fate had separated for a while and then re-

united this evening in June. I sat like one spell-bound but in reality supremely happy. You should have seen how attractive he looked—manly, with an air of self assurance as well as charm. His personality, warm and kindly, fairly radiated sunlight.

Our host kept the record-player going, remaining serious and silent at first. The teacher was temperamental—constantly excited, sad and sentimental or in ecstasy. If he thought something well said, he grasped the hand of the speaker, thanking him in glowing terms.

Speeches were next in order. The host delivered a funeral oration over a shapely bottle, originally from the south-lands and recently full of the most delectable wine, now doomed, with others, to the ash-heap in the rear of the premises. None may foresee the end or escape his destiny.

We danced for a while. Someone suggested coffee. Inga and I retired to the kitchen and tended the fire. The host followed us, showing where to find cups and other things needed. There was buttered bread in the cupboard. Inga went back to set the table, but our host sat down in deep thought, looking into space.

"How very serious you are," I told him. "You think so? This is how I feel lately." "O, I see." I had no desire to pry into his affairs, but I got his story forthwith. He had been engaged but the girl broke it off, announcing her engagement to another. They then paraded arm in arm through town and passed his office window daily as if taunting him.

"Stop thinking about this girl," I suggested.

"As if I haven't tried. If she would only quit passing my window," he said.

Just then the doctor appeared.

"How about the coffee," he enquired "I am more than ready for it. Can't we speed things up for you?"

"It is all but ready," I told him.

They went back to the living room, and the kettle began to sing. Then the teacher looked in.

"You are a gifted woman," he said.

"How can you tell?"

"By the wrinkles on your brow when you concentrate."

My first spoonful of coffee went into the coffeepot.

He bent over me and demanded in a deep voice, "What is your advice for hopeless love?"

"Love another," I suggested, dipping a heaping spoonful into the coffeepot.

He grasped my hand.

"Thank you, most likely you are right."

Then we sat down to our coffee.

I paid very little attention to Inga that evening. Doubtless she was enjoying herself, for only once did I hear her mention our return trip to the doctor. He looked at his watch. His friends noticed it and heard the remarks. They said they wouldn't hear of such a thing.

"You are the guest of honor here," said the host. "You offend us by mentioning it."

"Agreed," put in the teacher. "We invited you here and you will not leave until we say so."

"Hear!" echoed the host.

"I reconcile myself to this decision," replied the doctor, and laughed. "The car is ready when it pleases you."

The record player was wound up and glasses filled anew.

I stood in the open doorway inhaling deeply of the clean fresh night air. Before I realized it the doctor was beside me. He pointed to a tiny patch of sunlight on the mountain top.

"What do you think this is?" he asked.

"Evenglow."

"No, the morning-glow."

"Very well. Not much difference this time of year. But of course the time passes."

"I've been watching that spot," he continued. "It is growing larger. The sun is rising from the ocean. A new day has dawned. And you have seen it with me."

"High time to set out for home," I sighed.

"No, now we shall dance," he replied, with a smile that warmed me through and through. I forgot the morning-glow and the new day, when those grey-blue eyes looked at me.

"By the way," broke in the teacher. "There has been no toast proposed to the guest of honor. This will never do. If no one else volunteers, I consider it my duty." Whereupon he lost no time. In a lengthy discourse he set down the different periods of a lifetime as the acts in a play. When one act is over another begins. Between them people wait in suspense. Would these be rocky heights to climb or green fields to cross? He wished his friend fair seas and flowery strands. He spoke of youth, love and happiness approaching like a young bride in fine raiment. He reminisced on their years in school and thanked his friend with the pathos of a funeral, or a departure to distant lands. "No more speeches," said the host, "this was a masterpiece." Then we emptied our glasses in a final toast.

The sun had come out in full glory. All of us were outside, ready to leave. But at the last minute our host changed his mind. I pulled a sprig of heather to wear. There was sparkling dew on the grass, birdsong all around and the heavens a cloudless blue. We

said our good-byes, the doctor offered me the seat at his side. Then we were off at a high speed.

Not much was said on the way. The teacher and Inga in the back seat slept most of the time, but I kept thinking how deplorably short the distance into Reykjavik. I felt extremely comfortable. With this person beside me, I feared neither danger nor trials. I would have gone with him, confident and unafraid, against all odds. I would have gone with him to the ends of the earth, at his slightest wish.

There was no traffic at this hour. At the farms we passed, all was in deep sleep. But nature was refreshed like a newly wakened child.

Before we realized it, there was Reykjavik glistening in the sun, the ocean a bright blue and the glacier on the horizon swathed in a misty veil.

First we took the teacher home, then Inga. She was too sleepy to pick out her luggage and asked me to take it along. I then told the doctor where I lived. When we were almost there he remarked without turning his head, "I have no desire to go to sleep. Mornings like this one are rare in beauty. Won't you come with me down to the sea?"

"I am ready," I told him with heart elated. We took the Laugarnes road, then turned right. He picked the road. He brought the car to a stop. We stepped out together into the sunlight and the morning.

How intensely green the grass in the home fields had turned. Only at the height of the season is it just that shade. We were down on the beach in a moment. The tern screamed overhead. A short distance out the water was dotted with sea-fowl. At our feet the inlet lay asleep, mirror-smooth, with mountains looming on the farther side. It almost seemed that God

had just finished his work of creating the earth and that we were the first human beings to view his masterpiece.

"I think a great deal of this spot. Don't you think it is beautiful? I often go here, when alone."

"Believe it or not, I've never been here before."

"I thought as much. We sometimes wander too far in our quest. There are many attractive scenes around here."

We sat down on a boulder by the water's edge. The tide was in and the water seemed to reach for our shoes caressingly.

"Do you think we have ever met before?" asked the doctor.

"No, not that I know of."

"When I came to the door last night and saw you standing there, I thought that I recognized you. Did you notice my scrutiny? All night I've racked my brains about it."

"That's strange," I told him.

"Has this ever happened to you?"

"I don't know. Once, perhaps."

"If I were a Hindoo, I'd think we had met in a previous incarnation," he added pleasantly.

Now a pause. The doctor sat gazing thoughtfully into the distant blue.

"Do you know it happens also that people recognize places they visit for the first time. I've heard of a man who travelled to a distant country," he continued slowly in a quiet voice as if to himself. "He came to an unknown city in the gold of the evening sun. It was a wonderful city. But the greatest surprise was that it looked familiar. He recognized the houses, the tree-covered hillsides and blue mountains in the distance. The people in the streets spoke a foreign language, but he felt that they were his brothers and sisters. He had found his fatherland in a distant part of the world.

Perhaps he had unconsciously been in search of it all his life. He said to himself—here I'll spend the rest of my life. This is my home."

"And did he stay in this unknown land?"

"No, he went back to his home. He could not renounce his duties."

"What happened after that?"

"He was a foreigner in his own native land. He suffered from longing for that other. No one understood him."

The story was finished and the speaker looked dreamily out to sea. I had not seen him look so serious before, yet he never lost his mild and pleasant manner, that constant glint of sunlight.

He turned toward me smiling. "Your eyes are beautiful," he remarked.

Back to the car again, and I mentioned being thirsty. He found some ale and we sat down in the sun while we emptied the bottles.

Suddenly we heard a heavy footfall. A laborer passed, on his way to work. He flashed a friendly grin and we gave him a cheerful good morning.

The city was still fast asleep. But this was journey's end. We had arrived at my home. We sat in silence for a while looking at the empty streets.

"Well," I ventured, "shouldn't we bring in the luggage?"

"No hurry," he said pleasantly, but opened the door. We carried the luggage into the vestibule and piled it up.

"I guess this is all," he said.

"Yes, everything," I agreed absently.

We faced each other. He, hat in one hand, extended the other. The morning sun enveloped us. It blinded my eyes. I closed them as he kissed me good-bye.

A moment later I found myself

alone in the doorway, watching him cross the yard away from the house. He paused for an instant at the gate and smiling, waved his hand.

The car had disappeared in the stillness of the morning. All was quiet. It was as though I awoke from a dream. Was the man gone? That kiss was all too brief. I did not try to sleep.

At nine o'clock I was at the office as usual. The manager called me and dictated letters nearly all morning. He walked the floor while I worked at top speed. Sometimes I scarcely knew what I wrote. Great was my relief when the clock struck twelve.

Outside the sunlight shimmered. I removed my hat to enjoy the warm feeling. I liked the noise of the centre of town, the rattle of cars and the people scurrying about. Old Reykjavik, I thought, you are a fine looking and a good town, but at your best of an early morning, seen only by the laborer on his way to work and a man and woman who forgot to sleep, because the night was bright as day.

Back in the office a quantity of work awaited me. I was to copy a stack of letters in several different languages. I sat down at my typewriter, but found it hard to concentrate. Scenes from the previous evening, the night and the morning, began to intrude. All at once I saw that man, real as life. There he stood, right in front of me, tall and well built, with blue-grey eyes and ashen-blond hair. My heart beat a little faster. I looked away from him and plugged away at my letters. But he does not leave. There he stood and smiled at me. Always that easy poise.

"What are you doing here, my good man," I said. "Can't you see I'm working? I am sorry to have to remind you it is highly improper to waste the time of a girl at work." It made no impres-

sion on him. He merely laughed at me. How very charming he was. "See, now I made a mistake. This is your fault." I grabbed the eraser, frowned and gave him a sharp look.

"A fine thing to have to hand this to the manager. Can't you leave for a minute while I finish up?" It had no effect. He now began to chat with me. I could hear his voice distinctly above the clicking of the machine. He had a striking and an alluring voice. It was a calamity that he began to speak, for his voice disturbed me even more than his eyes did.

And he remained all day.

I hurried out to coffee at a girl friend's, south of the lake. She said I looked strange and asked what had happened to me. I said I did feel a little strange.

When I passed the church on my way back, I heard the sound of hymns and organ music from within. It seemed to me this was the wedding hymnal. Strange idea, I thought, getting married in mid-afternoon. Still, in other lands they do it, and all is said to go well. But how would it be to get married bright and early, say around six o'clock of a sunny summer morning out in the open? Why not down by the sea? Couldn't the bridegroom wear a light-grey suit and be tall and broad shouldered with grey-blue eyes and ashen-blond hair?

I tripped through the center of town. The wind blew my hair this way and that. Sometimes it feels good to be alive.

The ship was to sail at six o'clock. The letters, all signed, lay on my table. Nothing remained but to get them into envelopes. It was now half-past five. I lost no time, then hurriedly put on my coat, snatched up the letters and sped down to the harbour.

There was a crowd on hand as

always when a ship leaves for foreign lands. I pushed my way through to the gang-plank and deposited the letters in the mail-box with a sigh of relief, thinking I would now linger a bit. I really felt too lazy to force my way back at once.

People who had been seeing friends off, were now crowding ashore. What a big number of passengers. It must be thrilling to put out to sea in such weather.

On the upper deck I noticed a man in a light-grey suit, who reminded me of the doctor. But this had been happening to me all day in town, so I wasn't surprised when it occurred once more.

The people were still taking leave of each other. They embraced and kissed. Young girls laughed and shouted, flashing sweetest smiles at friends and relatives on shore. Dignified old men lifted their hats with amiable reserve, while elderly ladies dabbed at the corners of their eyes.

I now take another look at the man in grey. The crowd has dispersed, so I get a better view. I gave a start and my heart skips a beat, then pounds furiously. No mistake about it, there he stands. I recognize his clothes, his eyes and mouth. Now he smiles. His eyes are even more fascinating than I had remembered. But why is he here? Apparently he is not coming ashore. Is he leaving with the ship. Now he turns to a girl at his side and says something. She carries an armfull of roses.

The whistle blows. A cold shiver runs through my body. The gang-plank is removed. I hold my breath. He is sailing.

In front of me I see two girls I know. "Who is the lady with the flowers?" I ask them. "The doctor's wife, of course," says one of them. "Where do you hail from?" Don't you know they were married today?" "O," I comment, as though it were no concern of mine.

"Yes, they were finally married," puts in the second one. "They've been engaged for years." "He is said to have obtained a position abroad," adds the first one.

The ship edges slowly away from the pier. Now there is a small wake between it and the shore.

I give a glance at the doctor. He lifts his hat and the sun touches his hair.

I am carried along with the crowd away from the pier, then wander along the beach toward town, well away from the throng. Behind me I hear a heavy footfall. I look over my shoulder. A laborer homeward bound. I seem to remember that face, but am unable to recall where I've seen it before.

There is not a ripple on the sunlit sea. The ship passes slowly out of the harbour.

I know I am sleepy. It is best to home and retire.

But I spent a wakeful night.

The author of this story, Svanhildur Þorsteinsdóttir, is the only daughter of the poet Þorsteinn Erlingsson (pronounced Thorsteinn), and his wife, frú Guðrún J. Erlings. She lives in Reykjavík, Iceland, and is well known for her carefully written and refined short stories. These have appeared in various periodicals, including one in the "Tímarit" of the Icelandic National League, in 1941. Her collection of short stories, *Álfaslóðir*, published in Reykjavík, in 1942, was very well received, and the author is at work on a second volume.

Frú Svanhildur is a cultured woman who has been a teacher of French, and also a secretary in the Icelandic *Althing* over a period of years. Her husband, Sæmundur Stefánsson (frá Völlum in Svarfaðardal), is a wholesale merchant. They have two young sons. —Ed.

A LETTER FROM PARIS

This interesting and informative letter has been sent to the Icelandic Canadian by Thora Asgeirson, who is studying music in Paris on an Icelandic Canadian Club scholarship, given to her by the Icelandic community here, and other friends.

20 Rue Chardon Lagache,
Paris 16e, France,
February 22, 1952

Dear friends,

Well—here I am after almost five months in Paris with so much to tell you I feel I would have a hard time sorting out the details! So—I'll just plunge in and ramble on in my usual fashion of writing letters.

As you know already I am studying with Madame Alice Gaultier, an excellent teacher and wonderful pianist. She studied with Maurice Ravel and Albeniz and later Alfred Cortot (of whom she is now a colleague) at L'Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris of which distinguished school Cortot was a founder. Mme. Gaultier was also a colleague of Gabriel Fauré who chose her to play his piano works! I take one private lesson a week and am studying a lot of French music with her—works by her former associates Ravel and Fauré particularly, which I enjoy so much.

Along with my own piano work, I began in January the course in Chamber music at L'Ecole Normale de Musique—a field of music I have for a long time wanted to go into—and what a joy it is! Our professor is a well-known violist, M. Benoit, a warm-hearted man with a sense of humour, being at the same time an excellent and exacting musician! There are about twenty of us, pianists, violinists, violists and 'cellists in the class amongst whom are four Americans, two English students, an-

other Canadian from Montreal, a Yugoslavian, a German. The remainder are French of course. The class is every Monday afternoon from 2.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m., during which time one small group after another plays its prepared Trio, Quartet or Quintet. Monsieur Benoit sits beside the pianist and listens critically and "stops the music" whenever he hears something he doesn't like and that passage is repeated until it is corrected or improved. My quartet is playing Mendelssohn's First. I am also working in a Trio which is studying a seventeenth century work arranged by Monsieur Benoit. While one ensemble plays, the rest of the class may, if they wish, look over the shoulders of, or turn pages for, the players. In this way we are able to learn many works besides the particular one we are studying. It's really fun to "make music" in a group and particularly this purest kind of music! Claudio Arrau, the great Cuban pianist, (and I hear this from his most outstanding pupil, a Cuban girl, in whom I have made a fast friend here in Paris) says that for a pianist to be a really good musician he or she must study Chamber Music. For a solo instrumentalist it is a valuable experience to undergo the severe discipline of subjugating one's own performance to produce really beautiful ensemble work.

Outside of my actual practice time I am learning a lot from the marvelous offerings given in the many beautiful concert halls. Last fall I heard a series of seven recitals at the famous Salle Pleyel given by the great German pianist Wilhelm Kempff—no less than the whole thirty two sonatas of Beethoven! I took my music with

me and followed each sonata as he played them. Incidentally, at concerts here one sees opened music on the laps of almost every second person. Paris is thronged with students and lovers of the arts, in general. They make most enthusiastic and active audiences. They shout and stamp their feet—what they shout depends on whether they like or dislike what they hear, of course.

Amongst many solo recitals I have heard, two revelations for me were Walter Gieseling and Edwin Fischer. Naturally I have been to many orchestral Concerts and concerts of religious music in various cathedrals, as well as to the grand and extravagant Opera house where I heard on one occasion Kirsten Flagstad in a program of Wagner and Richard Strauss accompanied by the opera Symphony Orchestra; and on another occasion two contemporary French "musical-dramatic" ballets "Jeanne au Bucher" and "Le Chevalier Errant". Both programs were truly magnificent, and all the more thrilling being in that romantic "Opera". One always has a choice of three or more wonderful concerts every evening, not to mention the vast choice of theatre presentations, art exhibits and public lectures.

Since the new year, I am a member of Jeunesse Musicale de France, an organization which makes it possible for members to hear great artists and orchestras at greatly reduced tariffs. They also present special programs for members only, with a "Conférencier", that is, a speaker who talks about and analyses the music to be performed, the artists or orchestra illustrating each phrase or section as he talks about it. Then the works are played in their entirety. Who can imagine a more ideal way to learn the literature of music! Last Sunday morning I

heard one of these programs, all Wagner, with a fine full orchestra and soloist, Marit Iséne, a Norwegian singer, who was marvellous.

Another instructive and exceedingly enjoyable offering here is the dress rehearsals of great orchestras and soloists open to the public. Tomorrow morning for example I am going to hear Aldo Ciccolini, the brilliant young pianist, rehearse amongst other things on the program being Beethoven's fourth concerto. These take place every Saturday morning at the Theatre des Champs Elysées.

Opportunities for me to play have been restricted mainly to small groups of friends, naturally. However there is a club of Canadian Musicians in Paris, of which I have just become a member, who meet about once a month for musical and social activities. I have already met part of this group—some French Canadian musicians from Montreal, very congenial friends! I have yet to attend my first meeting with them but it promises to be enjoyable—and perhaps there I shall do some playing from time to time.

Now, speaking of playing, I come to a project carried out two weeks ago that I think will specially interest you: I made a recording of a short piano program to be broadcast in Iceland. This was arranged by a young man Mr. Daði Hjörvar who was working with the U.N.O. broadcasting to Iceland. It was suggested by Daði to another Icelandic piano student here, Guðmundur Jónsson, and myself, so we spent an enjoyable day making the recordings at Radio-Diffusion Française. Daði Hjörvar introduced each one of us in a few paragraphs. With regard to me he stated I was "Vestur-íslenzk", mentioned where my parents came from and who they are, that I am studying under a scholarship given

to me by the Icelandic Community and other interested friends and that I hoped to visit "ættland mitt" before returning home to Canada. I hope everything went according to plan and that these recordings did go over the air!

Speaking of Iceland and Icelanders. I met these people through events at the Legation of Iceland, the minister's home, Mr. Benediktsson and at the home of the Consul Mr. Henrik Björnsson. I have been getting to know the Icelandic community in Paris and enjoy very much being with them! They are all so "skemtilegir" and intelligent. I have met Icelandic students of languages, history, sculpture, architecture, painting, and music of course, to mention a few. The first time I went to the Consul's home I had a delightful evening with some of them. First of all Mr. and Mrs. Björnsson are wonderfully kind and hospitable and everything was so informal and friendly. The highlight of the evening, almost, was "kaffi", kleinur and vinarterta, delicious things that I hadn't tasted for what seemed like ages! Afterwards Guðmundur Jónsson and I played for the gathering. They all seem to be so musical and expressed warm appreciation.

There was a big affair in January for all the Icelanders in Paris at the minister's home (both the minister and Consul have beautiful apartments not far from Place du Trocadero—a lovedly district). Mr. and Mrs. Benediktsson made the evening so free and enjoyable by their warmth and hospitality. I met dozens more Icelanders amongst whom was Thor Thors whom I knew before of course, and Haraldur Sigurdson the well-known musician, whose home is in Copenhagen. His Austrian wife is a singer and their daughter Elizabeth

an excellent pianist studying with Marguerite Long in Paris.

Again we had a veritable feast. Amongst several other dishes were whale meat, lifrapilsa, harðfiskur with butter, herring, anchovi and brown bread. Afterwards we sang songs around the piano, in Icelandic, French, German and I don't remember what else! All the boys have fine strong voices and with the women, heartily enjoy group singing. I remember once when a group of us had supper out—it was after the memorial service at the Legation for the late President of Iceland—and after the meal we migrated to a restaurant nearby and sang. Of course I mostly listened, a lot of the songs being new to me. Some of the songs we sing in Winnipeg are considered old fashioned by them! I have made attempts at speaking Icelandic—in ghastly fashion—but they tell me I would "pick it up again in no time once in Iceland".

Speaking of languages, I am making my way pretty well in the French tongue. I have many French friends with whom I speak it all the time. One is a girl who lives in the same apartment building as I and who works at the American Embassy. We two attended a U.N.O. meeting together at the Palais de Chaillot. This was a sub-Committee meeting so unfortunately we didn't hit upon Vishinsky and such big names, but it was nevertheless extremely interesting—not the speeches, I hasten to add, they sounded just discouragingly meaningless to me—but the United Nations in action. The big circular conference table with a card before each place indicating each one of the numerous countries from all parts of the world (Iceland was there of course), the different racial types and colors of the representatives and their variety of languages; it was

quite amazing to think of them all assembled in one room and understanding one another, linguistically speaking that is, by means of instantaneous interpretations through that ingenious system of earphones on which you can switch from one language to another by merely pressing a button. Each one of us spectators were equipped with one also in our seats in the gallery. The Palais de Chaillot itself is a massive and magnificent modern structure! It contains several museums as well as a large theatre or concert hall. It's situation is striking too for being on the right bank of the river, it's two sections form a frame, (when looking from Place du Trocadero), for the famous Tour Eiffel directly across the river. This is typical Parisian planning.—Everything seems constructed with a view to amazing the onlooker by it's striking site.

With another group of French friends I made a trip to Germany in January where, in Bad Kreuznach, we were guests of a French Occupation Army Captain for a five-day hunt on his hunting area. We ladies didn't carry arms of course but we enjoyed tramping after the hunters and dogs over the hills and through the woods. The sun shone and it snowed—I must say it was a welcome interlude after dear but gray Paris skies in that season! Incidentally, after seeing a wild boar and two foxes and several goats and hares, the result of the whole five days was only one hare and a small bird!

I visited Weisbaden one day with two of the ladies—a lovely city, one of the very few which were not demolished during the war, I saw Sarrebrucke and other remnants of German cities and towns. Frightening sights! Particularly for me, who like most of us from the other side, can't even

imagine what a war means in cold, plain, cruel terms!

Although I was there for only a very short time, I felt very much at home, strangely enough. Germany impresses me as being very clean and the people of serious and of solid temperament not unlike Icelandic temperament. perhaps. Many words in German resemble Icelandic words, and often I could get the sense of a conversation because of this.

I must tell you about my living arrangements here which might be of interest to you since the system of lodgings is quite different from Western Canada. Well, I live "sous les toits de Paris" as the expression goes, yes on the top floor of a several-stories "immenble" in a tiny two room apartment of primitive conveniences. There is the usual courtyard and my windows on one side face the court and on the other look over an avenue. My domicile is complete with several beautiful French windows, many enormous pieces of impressive furniture in beautiful wood (not what we in America would call "functional furniture however), countless elaborate mirrors of various sizes everywhere—but, no bathroom (only a "cabinette de toilette"), only running cold water (and is it ever cold!). And no heat! Voila! the clue to French living—everything for the pleasing of the esthetic sense to the utter neglect of the poor old body. Bathing then is quite an operation—consists in boiling water on a gas stove and sponging in an ice cold kitchenette! As to heat, it is confined to one room (where I practise) and comes from a small electric heater which I purchased. It took a while to get toughened to these "camp style" conditions, but now I find all these things have their

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A Country Squire In North Dakota

By Holmfridur Danielson



The Goodman Home, built in 1915

It was a glorious afternoon in late June, when we drove out to visit the fabulous farm of Grimsi (Thorgrimur) Goodman of Milton, North Dakota. Mrs. Gudrun Olgeirson first drove me to Milton to pick up Mrs. Kristin Goodman, (Grimsi's mother, and sister of Mr. Justice Grimson). Then back to the farm which is situated a little better than half way between Mountain and Milton.

As we entered the long driveway which leads from the highway I could see, emerging from the soft green countryside, the large substantial home which the Goodman's built in 1915. It stands on a rolling hill, towards the back of a newly landscaped lawn, surrounded by shrubbery and flowers. On the far side of the house, and giving the place the appearance of a small village, are scattered innumerable, well-kept farm buildings, including even a private grain elevator.

My first breathless thought as we stepped out of the car on the edge of that nice smooth lawn, was, "What

manpower it must take just to cut this lawn" But how silly of me! Of course the Goodman's have a power lawnmower. Indeed, I was to find out that the whole operation of this huge farm enterprise is mechanized to the Nth degree.

The day of our visit had been a busy one for the Goodman family. About two hundred boys and girls from 4-H clubs from three counties had swooped down on the premises in the forenoon, with their leaders, to get a first hand impression of a successful farm project and a demonstration in how to operate it. Offices had been set up in one of the outbuildings, and a methodical survey had been made of the farm.

The young folk had just departed, and in spite of the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Goodman must have been very tired after such a strenuous day, they met us at the gate and with smiling courtesy proceeded to show me around the place. Mr. Goodman and his son, Glen, looked like farmers out of a movie, in their well-fitted khaki

shirts and slacks, which harmonized completely with the spic and span appearance of this self-contained farm project, which is in effect run like a well-oiled factory.

Mr. Goodman took out the car, or rather one of the cars, and with Mrs. Goodman we started meandering about the premises. We drove along the coulee (a **Coulee** is absolutely a **must** on the best and most picturesque farms around Mountain!) which dips gracefully down the side of the hill west of the house and deepens as it fallows a north-easterly course past the farm buildings, and there in a sheltered hollow we came upon **the corrals!** Mr. Goodman, who with his sons, farms 12 quarter-sections, is not one to drain his land of fertility by pure grain farming. Although his lush grain fields reached their mantle of green far and wide on his vast holdings, he also has large herds of cattle and scores of hogs, which we had seen contentedly waddling in a large pasture by the highway as we came by.

My meager childhood knowledge of farming includes the memory of scrawny cattle who were wintered outside, huddled together about closely cropped straw stacks, and shivering in the bitter winter wind. But this was something else entirely! This feeding lot was really a joy to behold.

There is this deep gully which passes the house on the west side, and where Kristin Goodman's children and grandchildren used to play and run their sleds in winter, now the little great-grandchildren have taken over that prerogative. The coulee gradually deepens and widens, and some distance to the north-east, in the ravine, have been built the winter shelters for some hundred short-horn beef cattle that are raised on the farm. In the centre of the lot is an enormous roof-

ed feeding shed, walled in except on the south side, and inside that is the huge hay bin, with open grills on three sides, so that the cattle can feed without trampling down the hay, which has already been chopped and forced into the enclosure by blowers. Along the south side of the deeply sheltered lot is a concrete stall with long feeding troughs where the silage is fed.

"But isn't that a long way to haul the silage?" I ventured, having noted the silo situated right along side the business-like elevator, back among the farm buildings. Evidently my ideas about farming were sadly out of date, for Mr. Goodman smiled good naturedly and assured me that the silo was not in use any more!

"See", he said, "I'll show you where we keep the silage". And there, dug into the side of the coulee, were two ingeniously simple trenches, where the silage is kept just a few feet from the feeding troughs, one for corn and one for green hay!

Back we went to the barns, passing Glen's son, Kristin Goodman's young great-grandson, who, jauntily seated on horse-back, was herding home the 10-12 sleek looking jersey milk cows. We got to the barn ahead of them and watched them being herded into their stalls which run along one side of the modern concrete-floored barn. At the head of the stalls is a maze of pipes, water pipes with drinking bowls for each two stalls, and pipes containing the electric wiring to which the milking machines are attached. But first the udders must be washed, and in comes the Frenchman who is working at the Goodman's this summer on a government agricultural exchange basis, with warm water in a pail and some cloths. As the low hum of the milking machines begins we inspect the

other side of the barn, with its enclosures for the calves. In one of these pens we find a tiny, shiny morsel of a jersey calf, only eight days old and looking like a curly, chocolate-colored fawn, his friendly eyes circled with paler patches of color. In another pen, an energetic young animal had broken the water pipe and all the water had been drained out of the well.

"How drastic," I sympathized, "aren't you without water then?" "Oh, no, we have several wells", says Mrs. Goodman, as she leads us to the room at the end of the barn, where the milking machines are kept. Here we find two powered water tanks, for hot and cold water; the power driven separator, and the engines for pumping the water and running the milking machines. There is also a very large sink for washing all this intricate apparatus, which is quite a chore, they tell me. The cream is shipped to the nearest market.

I did not take the time to look at the innumerable implements and machinery necessary to keep this enterprise going full swing, but discovered that the place boasts a team of horses besides the saddle pony.

Back at the house we chatted in the spacious coolness of the living room which, with the adjacent dining room takes up the entire front of the house. There is a dove-grey sculptured wall-to-wall rug, lovely pictures on the walls, graceful furniture including a small modern piano. I slipped into the glassed-in verandah which stretches across the front of the house, to do a few notes on the portable typewriter, standing on the desk which, with other office paraphernalia, occupies one end of the verandah, to facilitate the book-work necessary for operating this business-like enterprise. In the other end of the glassed-in porch was a low

settle, with an orderly array of books and magazines and some comfortable chairs, forming a nice summer reading room.

In the kitchen which is equipped with all modern appliances, including a large deep-freeze unit, we found Dorothy Ann, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Goodman, preparing strawberries for quick freezing. Dorothy graduated last spring from St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, majoring in English and History. She is a member of the Toast Mistress' club, Delta Chi Society, International Nations club and the League of Women Bowlers. She plans to take up teaching as a career.

The rest of the substantial old house, too, was a joy to behold, with its spacious upstairs bedrooms, comfortable appointments, and a large sleeping porch, looking out on a wooded view across the coulee. In Dorothy's room was a large cabinet with her collection of china horses, which she collects as a hobby. This contains an array of every imaginable type of steed, including a cunning model of 'Spark Plug'.

Looking out from the porch I spied a cute little stone cubicle, which I thought might be a children's playhouse, but was informed that it was the 'smoke house' where the Goodman's smoke their own home-cured hams and bacon. Nothing seemed to be missing to make this estate a fine example of a comfortable and satisfying way of life.

The reader might gather that Grimsi Goodman had been born with a silver spoon (or perhaps, more aptly a silver fork!) in his mouth. But this is not the case. Nor does there seem to have been a fairy godmother hovering about back in the pioneer days to make things easier for his widowed mother, and her six children, when she lost

her husband two months before her youngest son was born, and Grimsi barely ten years old.

It is the old pioneer story of hardships and the dauntless spirit to work and win through to better days, by determined personal effort and boundless faith.

Kristin Goodman is a daughter of Steingrímur Grímson and Guðrún Jónsdóttir who came to N. Dakota in 1882*. Kristin, herself did not come until three years later. She was married in 1888 to Stefan Guðmundsson, who had come to America in 1877, settling first in Wisconsin. Stefan was the son of Guðmundur Jónsson from Gautavík in Berufjarðarströnd, Iceland, and his wife Jarðþrúður Jónsdóttir (Guðmundsson) from Kelduskógum. Stefan took a homestead in "Fjallabyggð", between Mountain and Milton, in 1881. On this farm Mr. and Mrs. Goodman lived until his untimely death in 1899. They had adopted the name of Goodman for the sake of convenience, their contacts being largely with non-Icelanders, as they were somewhat on the edge of the Icelandic settlement.

After the death of her husband, Kristin rented the farm for 4-5 years, but this was unsatisfactory and did not give them enough to live on. So with the boys getting bigger, Kristin decided to run the farm herself. "We really had a good deal of pleasure in building up the farm", says the plucky little lady, "even if it was hard work. I became quite adept at running the binder, while Grimsi and Gudrun (the oldest girl) were busy stooking the grain, and the other girls did the cooking, with grandma Goodman bringing out the lunches".

The family lived in the old log house until 1915 when they built the grand new eight-room house, and all the children were efficiently helping mother, and furthermore she managed to give them all a sound education. Gudrun graduated from the School of Home Economics at the State College in Fargo, and taught school for 32 years. For two years she was employed as Home Supervisor in the Bureau of Rural Settlement and for one summer as FERA demonstrator when drouth forced the farmers to kill off their livestock. These organizations were sponsored by the Federal Government.

The other two girls, Jona Sigridur, Mrs. Svein Peterson of Bottineau and Gudlaug (Lulla) Mrs. E. Erlendson of Astoria, Oregon, also taught school before their marriage. A few years back, Mrs. Peterson was featured in McCall's Magazine in their series, "The Best Cook in Our Town", with a full page spread of pictures and Mrs. Peterson's famous recipes for vinarterta and other delectable things to eat.

The two younger sons are Stefan and Gudmundur, who together farm about 15 quarter sections of land in the district.

After Grimsi was married to Minnie Ottem of Osnabrook, N. D., who is of Norwegian descent, Kristin Goodman did not stay too long at the old home. "I wanted Grimsi to have the old estate, for his own family and besides I wanted to help the other boys with their housekeeping, as they were now building up farms of their own", said Kristin, but one can imagine her delight in visiting her sons and daughters who have become so well established. One of her greatest joys must be visiting the old homestead, in which the old memories are wrapped, and

*See: Thordarson article, Icelandic Canadian, Autumn 1951.

which has become a magnificent patriarchal estate.

Last year Grimsi Goodman, who at such an early age became his mother's partner in a valiant fight against adversity, put in his 45th crop on the farm. His son, Glen who is married and lives with his wife and their three children in a neat bungalow a short distance from the old home, works the farms with him. Another son, Dale, is also partner in the project. All the boys have had a college education, Richard the youngest being still at College. Kenneth Stefan who graduated as B.Sc. in Chemistry in 1945, worked for two years at the State Laboratory at Bismark, until his health broke down. He died in February 1949.

On our way back to Milton we passed again the extensive holdings of Kristin Goodman's other sons, Gudmundur and Stefan. We saw in action some of the machinery which is required to operate their 15 quarter-sections. On a vast field were several teams of horses, and three tractors spreading fertilizer which was being brought from the corrals where the cattle are wintered.

We spared a few moments to call in at the home of Gudmundur, which is a beautiful new ranch-type bungalow, with luxurious appointments, and scattered about are well-kept out-buildings, including a separate house for the help that is hired during the busy summer season. Mrs. Mundi

Goodman (formerly Runa Johnson) is a well-known singer in the district. Mr. and Mrs. Goodman were not at home but we were hospitably received by her mother, who lives with them and by her sister, Miss Holmfridur Johnson who is a school teacher and was visiting there in the summer holidays.

Finally after a delightful afternoon we drove back to Milton where Kristin Goodman now lives with her daughter Gudrun, who has retired from teaching. Gudrun had prepared a sumptuous supper which was greatly relished after our exhilarating outing.

Kristin Goodman's energetic outlook and serene contentment have not deserted her. She would not admit any fatigue after our bustling activities which must have taxed her rather frail slight physique. Her love of life and of beautiful surroundings is expressed in a lovely profusion of flowering house plants, and a well-kept garden. She is an active participant in community affairs, and in her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren she can feel the onward purpose of life and progress and immortality.

In saying good bye to her I felt a sense of gratitude for the privilege of knowing yet another of the intrepid pioneer mothers whose courage and stability of character played such an important part in the building up our country.

A. G. Eggertson, Q. C. was elected president of the Winnipeg South Centre Liberal Association at its annual meeting in February. He is a

past president of the Icelandic-Canadian club, a member of the executive of the Icelandic National League, and chairman of the board of Deacons of the First Lutheran Church.

Icelander Builds Unique Industry



Kelly Sveinson



Kelly Sveinson, Jr.

The City of Winnipeg is rapidly becoming one of Canada's larger industrial centres. One of its fastest expanding small manufacturing industries is "Selkirk Metal Products Ltd." with Thorkell Sveinson as its Plant Manager, and his younger son Kelly as Plant Engineer. The two main products manufactured by this concern are the Selkirk Insulated Chimney, and Heat Saver Metal Stove Pipe, both of which were invented by Mr. Sveinson, Sr., and are covered by exclusive patent rights or pending patent rights in his name.

The idea of the safety insulated chimney was first conceived by Mr. Sveinson when he was called to a neighbor's house in Selkirk to extinguish a fire in one of the old fashioned metal stove pipes so prevalently used in this country. Shortly after this incident Mr. Sveinson determined to design a safety chimney to eliminate such unnecessary fire hazards, reduce loss of life and property caused by stove pipe and chimney

fires, and thereby reduce the cost of insurance risks. It was not, however, until the depression of the thirties affected the Sveinson family that this idea reached fruition and the production of chimneys began in earnest. Mr. Sveinson like many others, in these times, was without sufficient employment to provide for his large family.

During this period, it was necessary that money be raised for patent fees and legal advice to protect his idea. With the help and encouragement of his wife, Johanna, Mr. Sveinson was able to overcome these financial problems and gain the final patent rights.

At first Mr. Sveinson made his chimneys entirely with tinsmith's hand tools in a small shop adjoining his home in Selkirk. During the years 1934-1944 he worked alone so that his production was naturally limited to about a hundred chimneys a year. As time went on he found increasing and expanding markets for his product as enthusiastic and satisfied

customers readily recommended them to other prospective buyers.

Thus began another depression-born industry.

In 1944 the Industrial Development Board of Winnipeg realized the possibilities of great expansion and future for this industry. The demand for the chimneys far exceeded Mr. Sveinson's production which was hampered by the lack of power tools, capital, and shortage of necessary materials. Through the efforts of the Development Board the firm Selkirk Metal Production Ltd., was incorporated that same year with Mr. Sveinson as Plant Manager, Mr. A. S. Leach, President, Mr. R. H. G. Bonnycastle, vice-president, Mr. H. G. H. Smith, secretary, and Mr. Daniel Sprague, treasurer.

The newly organized Company set up operations at 187 Sutherland Ave., in Winnipeg where specially designed power machines stepped production up to 450 chimneys in the first year of operation. Later, production rose to over 300 chimneys a month. With increased demand from all parts of Canada and the ready acceptance of the Fire Underwriters for low insurance premiums on buildings equipped with the safety chimney, further expansion was necessary. Accordingly, in 1950 the Company built its own modern factory with dimensions of 48' by 96' at a cost exceeding \$25,000 at 625 Wall Street. Their monthly sales have reached a peak of 900 chimneys. It now appears that further expansion will be necessary to keep abreast of the demand.

At the new plant every one of almost thirty separate operations required to manufacture a complete chimney, is now done by power driven machines requiring from $\frac{1}{4}$ h.p. to 3 h.p. motors. Many of the mach-

ines in operation have been specially designed and power fitted by Mr. Sveinson and his son. One of the machines, in particular, which is used for grooving the joints of the metal pipes used in the chimney casings is the only one of its kind in Western Canada. This task formerly required an extremely slow and strenuous manual operation and was hence a limiting factor in the production output. During the busy season of the year this machine is in operation continuously day and night.

The safety chimney is constructed of three concentric galvanized metal pipes of varying gauge. The inside pipe which forms the smoke stack is a heavy gauge flue. Sealed to this on both ends is a lighter pipe of one-inch larger diameter to provide a circular dead air space for insulation to keep the smoke stack hot and thereby ensure a better draft. The outer casing is another circular metal pipe six inches larger in diameter than the smoke flue. This arrangement provides a two and one-half inch circular space which is packed with fire-proof zonolite insulation to prevent condensation in the smoke flue and thereby eliminating the formation of creosote, soot, and other inflammable deposits in the smoke stack. It is this feature that also eliminates the necessity of ever cleaning the chimneys. Since the first chimney was installed, to the knowledge of the Company, no claims have been made for fire damage attributable to the chimney. The original chimneys installed in 1934 are almost without exception in excellent condition.

In addition to the installations of these chimneys by private individuals on shops and dwellings, the North American Lumber Company has become an extensive purchaser of the

chimney for their pre-fabricated homes. Other line lumber companies are also large buyers of the chimney. The Hudson's Bay Company is also using them extensively on their fur trading posts at various places, and many of the grain companies of Western Canada have installed them on their engine houses and offices in rural points. Lately there has been a keen demand for them from the northern regions of Ontario and Quebec and from paper companies for woods camps.

The widely recognized main features of the chimney are: safety from fire hazards, improved draft, which enables the heating units to operate more efficiently, durability, ease and low cost of installation, and reasonable insurance rates on buildings equipped with them.

In addition to the patents that Mr. Sveinson holds on the chimney, rights are also pending on an all-metal adjustable stairway which his company hopes soon to put into production. The uprights on this stairway are made of angle iron through which

holes are drilled at one inch intervals to give any desired rise to the treads. This stairway may be adjusted to any desired angle yet the stairway treads always remain level.

Mr. Sveinson is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sveinn Kristjanson who were early pioneers in the Gimli district. In his younger days Kelly was variously employed in tinsmithing, plumbing and steam engineering and still holds his diplomas in all these trades. Prior to the depression he was one of General Motors' top ranking salesmen throughout the Selkirk and Interlake districts. Mr. Sveinson is married to Johanna Sigurdson, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eggert Sigurdson whose family resided at Gimli, Winnipeg Beach and Selkirk.

Mr. and Mrs. Sveinson have seven grown children: Conrad, located at Sioux Lookout, Ont.; Mrs. Sylvia Richardson, Vancouver, B. C.; Mrs. Veronica Collison, Selkirk, Man.; Mrs. Dora Jenkins, Victoria, B. C.; Kelly, Jr., Winnipeg, Man.; Lillian and Lorraine, at home with their parents at 1588 Wolseley Ave., Winnipeg.

J. K. L.

GUS SIGURDSON'S POEMS SELLING FAST

Gus Sigurdson's second book of verse, **Dreams and Driftwood**, which came on the book market around Christmas time, is almost sold out,—only sixty copies remaining.

His first book was **Pencil-Stub Stanzas**. Both books have received favorable reviews in Western newspapers, particularly in the **Vancouver Sun**, written by Elmore Philpott.

While they last, both books are for sale at **Bjornson's Book Store**, 702 Sargent Ave., Winnipeg, Man.; **The Silver Star**, 3820 E. Hastings St. Vancouver, B. C.; and at the author's home

4333 Parker St. Vancouver, B. C. The price is \$2.00 each.

★

Miss Joan Bergman and **Miss Frances Abbott**, Winnipeg Winter Club skaters, retained their 1952 title in pair skating in the Western Canadian Figure Skating Championships held at Kerrisdale Rink in Vancouver, B. C., January 4th and 5th, winning the Glenora Trophy again for the third year. (See *Icel. Can. Autumn*, 1951).

Joan won figure skating's top award when she passed the gold medal test of the Can. Figure Skating Ass'n, in Winnipeg Mar. 15. She plans to turn professional next fall.

Succeeds in Radio and Movies



Eileen Christie

If you turn your radio dial to 550 (Bismark) on Sunday evenings at 9.30 you will hear the charming voice of Eileen Christie, who is featured in her own half-hour program on the N.B.C. Western Network, as soloist and Master of ceremonies. Each Sunday night there are also featured on her program guest artists whom she introduces to the radio audience.

All this, including her movie contract with Metro Goldwin Mayer, of Culver City is the result of her having won last year the coveted Atwater Kent audition over a large number of contestants. She has appeared in small roles in four movies, one of her first roles being one of the 3 stewardesses in "Three Guys named Mike" with Van Johnson. She is undergoing training in voice and dramatics with M. G. M.

Last year at the opening of the Hollywood Bowl Miss Christie sang the role of Adele in "Die Fledermaus", and she has sung at many concerts in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Hollywood even before she became a "movie starlet". And she has been generous in

contributing her talents to the Icelandic community on the coast, singing at many of their main functions.

Miss Christie, one of nine brothers and sisters, is a daughter of Kjartan Christophersson, real estate broker in San Francisco, and his wife Gudrun (formerly Stoneson of San Francisco). Kjartan is the son of one of the first pioneers of the Argyle (Man.) district, Sigurður Kristofersson and his wife Caroline Taylor, who started the first school among the Icelandic pioneers at Gimli, in the winter of 1875-76, and who was a niece of John Taylor, who brought the settlers from eastern Canada to New Iceland.

Mrs. Christophersson is a music teacher and Eileen's musical talent and lovely voice received every encouragement, so that she had been much noticed by music critics even while she was in her teens. Her voice is of an enchanting "coloratura" timbre, but on the whole has a warmer texture than the usual coloratura. When she was featured in the 1947 Christmas Carol Festival in San Francisco, she got what amounted to "rave" notices from the critics. One reviewer who went overboard in his enthusiasm said in part:

"... but even the most cynical were not prepared for this group, or for Eileen Christopherson! ... then all of a sudden Eileen stepped out,—blond and very beautiful. A white silk robe and the biggest blue eyes outside of an illustration in a fairy story.

"And then the voice! She sang like an angel. I've been hearing that for years, but never having heard an angel sing I wouldn't know whether the simile makes sense. But I can safely say that an angel should be proud to sing as Eileen did.

"When the song was over the people began to applaud, not just enthusiastically, but with that steady thunderous roar that adds up to unanimous opinion. They loved her. They weren't asking for repeats. They knew there could be no encore. They were just reacting to their hearts. It was a wonderful experience, not only to hear the beautiful girl singer, but to witness the re-action to her of the Christmas-minded crowd".

Miss Christie's speaking voice over the air-waves is delicately soft and cultured, in pleasant contrast to feminine voices in general which are so often crisp and Oh, so aggressively business-like!

When Eileen signed her name to the M. G. M. movie contract, she changed her surname to "Christie". She was married in 1949 to Norman Keller. They have one son and live in Hollywood.

H. D.

From Office Boy to Superintendent



Gustav Gottfred

When Gustav Gottfred, in 1947 was advanced to the position of Superintendent of the Commercial Telegraph office of the Canadian National Railways in Winnipeg, he had seen thirteen years of service in a similar capacity in Edmonton, with jurisdiction over all commercial telegraph offices of the C.N.R. in Alberta and British Columbia. His present position includes supervision over all these offices in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Western Ontario and entails a great

deal of travelling to the various offices in the larger centres of his territory.

Mr. Gottfred is in his 39th year of service with the C.N.R., having started in Winnipeg as an office boy at the age of seventeen. His work with the company was interrupted for a short period when he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in May, 1918 where he served until December of that year. After his return to the C.N.R. his exceptional ability has brought him steady advancement, culminating in his present position of trust and wide responsibility.

Mr. Gottfred has taken leadership in community services, having been a member of the Kiwanis Club for 25 years. While at Edmonton he served for one term as president of the club and has just completed his term as president of the main Kiwanis Club of Winnipeg. On the occasion of his retirement as president, Kinsmen, Lions, Optimists, Rotarians and all suburban Kiwanians gathered to honor him at the President's Ball, held at the Royal Alexandra Hotel, January 17th, this year. Mr. and Mrs. Gottfred were presented with a beautiful, mas-

sive silver service tray, in recognition of the fine service he had given to the Kiwanis Club as president. Mr. Gottfred is also a member of the St. John's Lodge of the Masonic Order.

Born in Winnipeg, Mr. Gottfred is the son of Johannes Gottskálksson who came to Winnipeg in 1885 from Tóvegg in Kelduhverfi in Þingeyjarsýsla, Iceland, and his wife Sesselia Magnúsdóttir. Gus, as he is usually called, was married in 1920 to Valdina Reykdal, daughter of Thorvaldur Jónsson from Reykholtssdal in Borgarfjörður, and his wife, Kristín Bjarnadóttir from Laugardal in Arnessýsla, Iceland. Mrs. Gottfred is a first cousin of Mrs. Grace Thorsteinson (formerly Reykdal) Business Manager of the Icelandic Canadian Magazine.

Mr. and Mrs. Gottfred have two sons, Raymond G. and Lorne A., who served in World War II. (See Icel.

Can. Sept. 1944). Recently Lorne graduated as a chartered accountant, while Raymond is credit manager for Canadian Industries Limited. Both sons are married and live in Winnipeg.

Mrs. Gottfred is a member of the Jon Sigurdson Chapter I.O.D.E., and does interesting handwork for a hobby. Their lovely home on Elm street bears witness to her artistic temperament, being adorned with several exquisite petit point pictures of nature scenes which she has designed or copied from small photographs. Last Christmas her sons, admiring her skill and dexterity in art work, gave her a set of oil paints and already she has done an amazing number of small oil paintings.

Mr. and Mrs. Gottfred are keen bridge players and enjoy social contacts with a wide circle of friends.

H. D.

HONORED BY ICELAND

Rev. P. M. Petursson has been invested with the Knight Cross of the Icelandic Order of the Falcon, for his participation in Icelandic cultural activities. Presentation was made by G. L. Johannson Icelandic consul for the prairie provinces, at the evening service in the First Federated church, Sunday, February 3.

Rev. Petursson has been minister of the First Federated Church of Winnipeg since 1935, president of the United Conference of Icelandic Churches for three years and president of the Icelandic National League for four years. He has also taken an active part in public affairs of his community (see Icel. Can. Spring, 1948), and served for nine years on the Winnipeg School Board, until last fall when he did not stand for re-election.

G. J. Sigurdson, Maple Leaf Creamery of Lunda, Man., topped all entrants in the number of awards for buttermaking at the sixty-seventh annual convention of the Manitoba Dairy Association held in February at the Royal Alexandra Hotel. He placed first in the De Laval highest-average-score special competition, winning a gold watch. He took a second watch for placing first in the Canadian Bank of Commerce special. He also took awards in a number of other events.

Mr. Sigurdson was also named vice-president of the Manitoba Buttermakers Association.

Other prize-winners among Icelandic Canadians in the buttermaking contest, were L. Magnusson, Treherne; C. Johannesson, Rosburn; S. Johnson, Riverton.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE SAGA OF THE ICELANDERS IN AMERICA

Volume IV. Dr. T. J. OLESON, editor. Published in Iceland by the Publishing Department of the Cultural Fund

The Icelandic title is "Saga Íslendinga í Vesturheimi." The word "saga" in the title includes a record of individuals and a history of the Icelandic national group in this hemisphere. The former is a "landnematal", little more than an enumeration of pioneers and their families, with the family lineage traced back a generation or two. Such a record is excellent for reference purposes and is especially appreciated by people in Iceland who are interested in the destiny of relatives and friends who left the homeland. Then there is an objective narrative of the development of community enterprises in the different districts, which in the whole provide the substance of the history of the Icelandic people in America.

Volume IV of this "Saga" or story consists of three Parts, and the first two follow the above twofold pattern. Part III breaks new ground. Individual enumeration has been discarded. Events and community organizations and efforts are selected not only for their factual value, but also, and perhaps mainly, for their interpretative value in revealing the character of the pioneers, the motivating purposes and impulses in their community planning and the impact of characteristic foibles shortcomings.

It is well that emphasis is now being placed on this phase of the story of the Icelanders in this country. The history of any national group in North America with an existence nearing the century mark, is bound to have a value in its totality aside from the record of individuals and the factual statement

of community enterprises. In the case of a group so mentally alert as the Icelanders, with independence in thought and demand for freedom many centuries old, such a history is bound to have more than its own intrinsic value. The successes may provide a model, the weaknesses sound a warning. This is what the historian Tryggvi Oleson has caught in the events covered in Part III of Volume IV of the Saga.

II

The story of the Icelanders in America is filled with interpretive events and incidents, though at no other time or place as closely packed together and so clearly revealing in import as in the period covered by Dr. Oleson in the current volume. Two may be mentioned. In volume III, the author Þ. Þ. Þorsteinsson, relates the events leading to what may be called the Icelandic Republic in New Iceland and very appropriately reproduces the constitution, which in some of its provisions as far in advance of the times. This constitution, of course had to be replaced by a proper municipal procedure, but that does not detract from its value as a "stórmérkilegur atburður í landnámssögunni", an exceedingly important event in the story of the pioneers. The determination to establish a democratic form of government was as strong in these pioneers in the year 1875 as it was in their Viking forefathers, who began laying the foundation for Alþing in Iceland a thousand years before.

Another interpretative event is

referred to in Part I of the Volume under review. The author of that part describes a society in the Argyle district which, he truly points out, is something singular in the history of the Icelandic people. In 1884 a Society was formed called, "Siðabótafélagið", The Reform Society. The following are three of the thirteen rules: (a) not to swear or blaspheme unnecessarily; (b) not to partake of intoxicating liquors; (c) not to commence the use of tobacco after a person became a member. This Society was bound to fail—such idealism is bound to fail anywhere in the stark realities of the world in which we live. But the aim of the Society, as set out in the rules, in revealing the true purpose and impulses which prompted the pioneers to migrate, is of tremendous significance. To say that these people migrated to America in a spirit of adventure or merely to seek an improvement in their personal economic welfare, is a misleading half truth. The Icelandic pioneers came to this country determined to take their full share in the building of a nation here and firmly resolved that in the Icelandic communities, which they would carve out, there would develop the highest type of citizenship.

III

The Argyle District

This part was written by G. J. Oleson, father of Tryggvi. He writes succinctly, yet clearly, with distinctive phrasing and idiom. Incidents are interjected which keep the reader interested. There is the incident of Guðrún, wife of one of the pioneers, Jón Goodman, whose little daughter fell into a 30 foot well in which there was

considerable water. Without hesitation Guðrún made her way down into the well by grabbing hold of old rims in the crib, got hold of the drowning girl in time and managed to bring her up. Then there is the story of the amazing grit of Asmundur Asmundsson who had both feet badly frozen when a young man in Iceland. They had to be severed and the stumps bled for 18 years. In spite of that handicap he carried on his daily tasks, emigrated to Canada and farmed successfully in Argyle.

Julli Oleson goes into unnecessary detail in many of his individual sketches but he covers the community activities very well which makes his saga a history of the district.

IV

The Lundar District

The space allotted to the Lundar District is not sufficient. In the present volume there are 85 pages and an additional 30 pages are to be included in Vol. V., making a total of only 115 pages which is too little for a district so rich in history creating events and enterprises. It was a mistake to divide the Lundar Saga and if necessary the Argyle story should have been shortened so that the additional 30 pages could have appeared in their proper place.

Part II was in the main written by Heimir Thorgrímsson who, with the limited space accorded him, has done very well. He, no less than Julli Oleson, makes his story interesting. Living conditions during the pioneer days are vividly brought home to the reader. The first winter (1884-5) seventeen people lived in one small log house. Then there were the losses

from prairie fires, the constant dread both spring and fall in most of the early settlements.

The chapter on winter fishing is interesting and is also very appropriate because many Icelanders know very little about fishing through the ice. The use of a jigger in setting nets under ice, a relatively recent invention, is well described. But in this Saga the main emphasis is on the pioneers, so the author might well have said something about winter fishing in the early days when the fishermen did not have horses or cabooses but only dogs and pulled the nets up out in the open. To keep warm and prevent the fish freezing before they could be taken out of the nets and dressed, the fishermen developed a sort of a dog-trot of movement in both feet and hands which they kept up all day. On cold windy days the wet woollen mitts froze very quickly and at times a pair would not last for lifting one net.

Heimir selects two of the leading men of the district, Skuli Sigfusson and Paul Reykdal, and relates their story in considerable but fair detail. The selection of only two is open to criticism, but the author is careful to point out that many others merited that their stories be told had space permitted.

Heimir states in his introduction that the story of the community enterprises in the district is to be told in Volume V. That district is rich in community effort, social, religious, cultural and, in particular, athletic. For this purpose 30 pages have been allotted, which no doubt is all that is available as there is to be only one more volume to the Saga. The author will have to

exercise unusual skill in doing justice to that subject in thirty pages.

V

The Leifur Period in the Winnipeg Saga

In Part III the historian comes to the fore. There is a complete absence of individual narrative but the events are selected from their interpretive as well as their factual value and viewed in their proper perspective in an appraisal of the whole period. This part covers the years from the arrival of the first settlers in 1875 to about the year 1890. Here the author makes a very natural break because the years covered are in so many ways a unit by itself. In that period, in the history of the Icelanders in Winnipeg the foundation was laid for what was to follow.

The first Icelandic weekly in Winnipeg, "Leifur", named after Leifur Eiriksson, began publishing in May 1883 and ceased publishing in 1886. But the activities of the whole period are so closely associated with the editor, Helgi Jonsson, and are so clearly mirrored in the paper that the whole period may appropriately be referred to as The Leifur Period.

In that period the Icelandic mind is seen at its best and its shortcomings are most clearly exposed. Here we find achievement and failure, unity and disagreement; lofty aspirations and unworthy criticisms, greatness yet in its midst a smallness of mind.

From the record available, Tryggvi Oleson, within a compass of one hundred pages, has gathered the evidence and placed it in such clear relief that it will remain indelibly impressed upon the reader's mind. By way of detail in that picture six il-

illustrations, three each way, may be given.

The greatness of the period:

a) In 1877 a society was formed, called "The Icelandic Society", later, "The Progress Society of the Icelanders in America". The object was: "to promote and preserve the honour of the Icelandic nation in this hemisphere; to cultivate and maintain among Icelanders that inherent independent urge to progress and enlightenment which during the centuries has been the distinguishing mark of the Icelandic people."

That deep sense of honour and that innate driving force never disappeared even during the darkest days of controversy and disagreement. They are the basis upon which rests the splendid individual and collective achievement and the enviable reputation of the Icelandic people in America.

b) In 1884 Frímann B. Anderson took the lead in a movement for the establishment of an Icelandic educational institution. Though little was accomplished the thought was not allowed to die and that initial step may be said to have finally resulted in the establishment a few months ago of the Chair in Icelandic Language and Literature in the University of Manitoba and the appointment of Prof. Finn-bogi Guðmundsson.

c) The first annual meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Icelanders in the Western Hemisphere was held in Winnipeg in June 1885 in the hall of the Progress Society. Here not only did a religious organization come into being, but a means was provided through which the best in the Icelandic cultural heritage could be guarded and preserved. Dr. Oleson refers to the annual meetings of the

Lutheran Synod as a sort of "Alþingi Íslendinga í Vesturheimi", and reaches this conclusion:

"It is hardly an exaggeration to say that no other Icelandic organization, with the exception of the Icelandic Weeklies, has made such a worthy contribution to the preservation of Icelandic culture in America."

The weakness of the period:

a) Unworthy criticism of men who gave of their best, and even, as all others, may have had their shortcomings. The animosities created at the time continued and constitute a blot on the history of the Icelandic people in Winnipeg.

b) The attacks on Leifur and its editor, even by men who did not have the courage themselves to venture into the risky undertaking of publishing an Icelandic paper. A vigorous defence was but natural. These attacks, coupled with deliberate undermining contributed to the untimely discontinuance of publication and made it almost inevitable that two weeklies would follow, destined to engage in bitter controversy from time to time during the next half century.

c) The vehement attack on the feeble missionary efforts, led by Dr. George Bryce of Manitoba College, to bring some of the Icelandic people within the Presbyterian fold. Their missionary was Rev. Jónas Jóhannsson, a man with very limited mental equipment and training and certainly not one to be feared. But the intolerance displayed at that time paved the way for the subsequent relentless opposition to every religious movement not within the strict orthodox Lutheran creed. Even overtures from other Lutheran bodies were resisted.

In my opinion "The Leifur Period" should be compulsory reading for

every student taking Icelandic at the University. It and the interpretive parts of the rest of Volume IV of the "Saga" should be read by all who understand Icelandic, whether they are interested in the particular district or not. Indeed, appropriate synopses might be translated into English and made available to anyone who is interested in the history of the Icelandic national group in America.

W. J. Lindal

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DREAMS and DRIFTWOOD, —Gus Sigurdson, Vancouver, 1951, pp. 104.

This is the second book of verse published by this young man. His first "Pencil-Stub Stanzas", was reviewed in these columns a year ago.

The author is at his best when writing about the men commonly called tramps, hobos or bums. There was a time when this group was a sizable element of our population. In those days thousands of men travelled the length and breadth of our country, riding the rods on the big freights in search of a day's work or a free meal. All this was changed when the war began. The transients piled out of the boxcars to enlist in the army or to take work in mines and factories. Now there is but a handful of these men left. The others have become respectable and are no longer a fit subject for poetry.

Gus Sigurdson knows the drifter and the bum and writes of him with rare good humour and great understanding.

All servicemen will recognize Whitey McKinnon and the likes of

him and will, as the author, wish him well where ever he may be:

"Whitey McKinnon
From Cape Breton Isle —
"I'll figure an angle",
He said with a smile,
"But lend me a buck,"
And you couldn't refuse
Though you knew that his angle
Was buying more booze.

Whitey McKinnon
On pay-day was there
Waving his money
Right up in the air;
Paying all debts
Till he borrowed some more;
Spending his money
To help win the war.

In poems like "The Brawl and the Black Maria" and "Scrap Iron Webb" the flavour of reality is strong and unmistakable. Less successful are his love poems and his musings on such abstract themes as the 'meaning of life'. There is nevertheless a good deal of robust, humorous and clever verse in this slim volume that one may read with pleasure and profit.

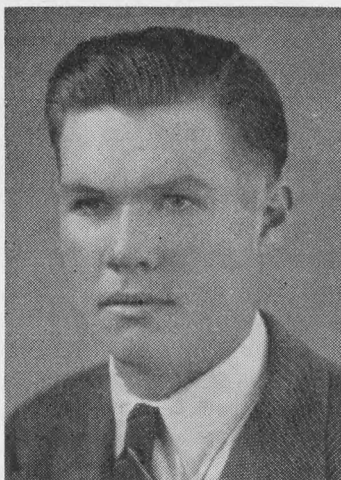
To sneer at the imperfections of a beginners' verse is easy. In the present case the author has a pat answer to the captious critic:
"The frowning face that always sneers,
Oh—may the devil take it.
It must have taken many years
Of evil thoughts to make it."

—H. Th.

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IN THE NEWS

WINS GRAND CHAMPION TROPHY



Benedict John Myrdal

Benedict John Myrdal was graduated from North Dakota Agricultural college in March 1951, majoring in Animal Husbandry and Economics.

During his senior year he was manager of the 1951 Little International Livestock Show; participated in the College livestock judging team at the American Royal Show in Kansas City Mo., and at the International Exposition in Chicago, Ill.

As an undergraduate he won the Grand Champion trophy for his work with Grasses and Legumes for Soil Conservation. He is a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity.

Benedict John is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Steini Myrdal, of Edinburg, N. D., and is at present farming in partnership with his father.

★

Wilhelm Kristjanson was elected first vice-president of the Manitoba Government Employees' Association, at the closing session of their conven-

tion, held in Winnipeg in January. **B. E. W. Doak** is president.

Mr. Kristjanson, who has served in the Canadian Reserve Forces for many years was promoted to the rank of Major last November. A veteran of the first World War, and having served in the Canadian Officers' Training Corps from 1921 to 1924, he rejoined the C.O.T.C. in 1939, with reserve force status, going on active service in January 1942, with the rank of lieutenant. He was appointed adjutant in 1943 and promoted to the rank of captain. He was retired from active service in March 1946 and is now in the reserve forces.

Mr. Kristjanson is president of the Icelandic Canadian Club, and past president of the National Club of Winnipeg.

★

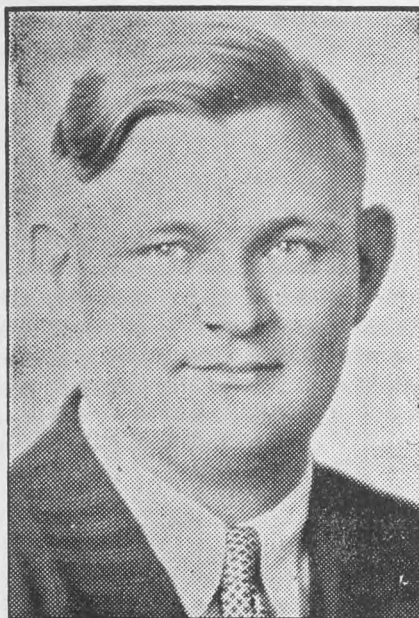


Miss Gudlaug Laura Einarson has been appointed Ass't District Superintendent with the Winnipeg Victorian Order of Nurses.

Miss Einarson graduated as a nurse from the Winnipeg General Hospital in 1942. She enlisted in the R.C.A.M.

C. in Feb., 1944 and served in Belgium and Holland (see Icel. Can. December 1945). She is a daughter of Mrs. Vilborg Einarson of Campbell River, B. C., and the late Thorsteinn Einarson, formerly of Arborg, Man.

★



Mr. Olafur N. Kardal of Gimli, Manitoba has recently accepted a contract for singing on the Lyceum Community Program Series in the State of N., Nakota, beginning September 15 1952.

Mr. Kardal began studying for his musical career here in Winnipeg under the direction of Mrs. B. H. Olson. Two years ago he was given an audition on the Stairway to Stardom program over station WCCO in Minneapolis, where he won first place among the contestants. Subsequently he enrolled at the MacPhail College of Music in Minneapolis as a student of Mr. and Mrs. James L. Manley, with whom he is currently studying.

Mr. Kardal is well-known in Icelandic musical circles here. He has appeared

on several occasions as soloist with the Icelandic Male Voice Choir. Since he began his studies in Minneapolis he has been a member of the MacPhail College Choir. Recently he has given a series of recitals throughout the Icelandic districts of Manitoba, and has appeared as soloist on Rotary Club programs here. Since continuing his studies in Minneapolis he has given many solo performances on various programs there and in other parts of Minnesota and North Dakota.

Mr. Kardal has been awarded bursaries to continue his musical training by the Icelandic Canadian Club of Winnipeg, The Gimli Women's Institute, and the Gimli Chapter of the Icelandic National League.

★

THREE AXDAL SISTERS, NURSES

When Olive Thora Axdal graduated as a nurse from the St. Paul Hospital, in Vancouver, B. C. in April 1951 she was following in the footsteps of two of her sisters, **Elmina** and **Lenora**. Olive Thora is serving with a hospital in Tillamook, Oregon, while Lenora, who graduated from the Winnipeg General Hospital in May, 1942, is in Berkley, California. Elmina (now Mrs. North) graduated from the City Hospital, in Saskatoon in Sept. 1942.

These three nurses are daughters of the late Thordur S. Axdal and Mrs. Jona Axdal who lived for many years at Wynyard, Sask. Mrs. Axdal is now residing in Vancouver, B. C.

There are four other daughters in the family and the girls have become well known for their musical talents. In 1938, the four oldest girls won second place in a "Search for talent program" at the Regina radio station, after winning first prize at Dafoe, Sask. Later they sang a vocal quartette at the Saskatchewan Exhibition in Reg-

ina. They are: Elmina (Mrs. North) Evelyn, Björg (Mrs. Hunter of Vancouver, and Lenora.

Another sister, Emily (now Mrs. Allan) a violinist, has also been guest artist at Regina radio program, "In Search For Talent". Later she completed, with honors, eight years of study in violin.

★

J. Ragnar Johnson, Q.C., of Toronto has been invested with the Knight Cross of the Order of the Falcon, by the Government of Iceland. He has served as Iceland's vice-consul in Toronto.

Mr. Johnson is a graduate in law of the University of Manitoba and lives in a Toronto suburb, where he was recently elected to the municipal council. He has also been appointed chairman of a committee of lawyers serving under the Canadian Bar Association, in the study of the rights and privileges of Canadian citizenship. Mr. Johnson is the son of Finnur Johnson of Winnipeg and his late wife, Gudrun, who passed away four years ago.

★

THE CANADIAN WHEAT POOL

An example of self-help and cooperation

Following the annual meetings of the delegates of the three prairie Wheat Pools the boards of directors of these grass-roots organizations met in an interprovincial session on January 16th, 1952.

The central body, Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers Limited, reported near record results achieved for members of the three Wheat Pools

in the crop year 1950-51. In true democratic fashion the deliberations of these elected representatives of over two hundred thousand Western farmers were passed on to the Western Agricultural Conference. From this body resolutions were submitted to sessions of the national organization, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, for transmission to the government of Canada.

It is well known that the crop year just ended was one of trial and tribulation. Hampered by weather and transportation difficulties but with the quiet determination and the resolution that has been indicative of prairie farmers over the years, Pool members still come up with another successful year of operations.

In actual cash, the Wheat Pools earned for themselves net surpluses totalling \$8,083,762. But perhaps the most important phase of Wheat Pool operations was the increase in membership. Surely this growth indicates that farmers all through the prairies desire most of all to work "each for all, all for each." Membership in the Canadian Wheat Pools has risen over the years to the extent that there are now some 226,000 active members.

These Pool members supported their own organization by working elevators and terminals at top speed to handle some 256 million bushels of grain, nearly half the Western grain crop.

From their first small beginnings the grain handling facilities of the prairie Wheat Pools have grown to include 1,906 country elevators with 1,677 annexes located throughout the Canadian West. There are ten huge terminal elevators owned by the Pools at Pacific and Lakehead ports. These elevators, country and terminal, have a total storage capacity exceeding 152

million bushels which represents approximately one-third of grain storage facilities available in Canada.

Whether benefits are measured by cash returns, or by improvements in grading and handling techniques, it would be difficult to find another business to match the record of the Canadian Wheat Pools. Not only do the Western producers who are the Wheat Pools earn surpluses of over eight million dollars in the year ended July 31st, 1951, but, in the operation of their own facilities over a quarter of a century, they have earned the capital investment of \$66.9 million which these facilities represent. In addition, they have paid themselves, in cash, patronage dividends totalling some \$52 million over that quarter of a century.

Delegates to the annual meetings of the Wheat Pools urged that the St. Lawrence Seaway be built and put into operation with all possible speed. These meetings also endorsed the Canadian Wheat Board as the best means yet devised of handling the big grain crops of Western Canada efficiently and economically. The International Wheat Agreement came under discussion and once again its principles were endorsed as a step forward in assuring the movement of wheat to the needy peoples of the world, at prices fair to producers on the one hand and consumers on the other.

The impelling motive behind the operations of the Canadian Wheat Pools is that of building up the co-operative movement in Canada—in the belief that Cooperation is the greatest force available to men to bring about lasting peace, and, in turn, national and international prosperity for all the world.

NORTH AMERICAN LIFE and CASUALTY CO.



Herbert Hunter, former Superintendent of Insurance for the Province of Manitoba, has accepted a position with North American Life and Casualty Company as Executive Director of Canadian Operations. Mr. Hunter will direct his activities from the Company's Canadian Head office, 382 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg.

North American Life and Casualty Company with home offices in Minneapolis, Minnesota, writes Life, Accident, Sickness and Hospitalization on both an individual and group basis. Their Canadian operations were initiated in 1947 with a pioneer agency at Winnipeg under W. E. Brunning as manager. Agencies have since been established at Vancouver, London, and Edmonton. The Company reported an overall increase of 66% in new premium writings in Canada last year over the year before.

The Company is currently licensed in all the provinces of Canada, except New Brunswick.

A Letter From Paris

(Continued from Page 27)

charm (!) Talk about glamorous life in Paris!

Seriously speaking, however, they tell me it was miraculous to have fallen upon this apartment, housing conditions being impossible. Here where I am independent I have the great advantages of having been able to bring in a piano, which I rent by the month, with which I can work whenever I please before ten in the evening. Most students have an awkward and expensive time fitting in their practising in studios rented by the hour, and very few have found families with pianos who tolerate a few hours of practise each day.

Like all French apartment blocks, this one has a "concierge" the woman who runs the mechanics of everyday affairs in the household. She has her place of abode just inside the door of the building. She receives and distributes the mail, she directs visitors to the right apartments (there are no numbers), she looks after the upkeep of the stairways and courtyard and halls, and she lets you in at night after that certain hour when the door is locked. Naturally she cannot get up in the middle of the night to let you in, if it happens you are particularly late, but the system used is a mechanism which makes it possible for the door to be opened by pressing a button on a series of wires or cords stretched across the room and the bed of the concierge. So when you ring the bell she, probably automatically in her sleep by now, fumbles around for the cord and presses the button that lets you in.

I forgot to mention that my apartment building, old-fashioned as it is,

is located in what is considered amongst the most "chic" quarters of Paris called "Anteuil", in the southwest corner of Paris. Before it's incorporation into Paris, it was the village of Anteuil, and in former times served as the peaceful country haven of such writers and artists as Boileau, Gaultier, Georges Sand, Le Comte de Lisle, Masset and La Fontaine, after whom streets are named here in the quartier.

Getting back to my apartment I must mention that I prepare my own meals, that is, in principal. This situation is made a little gayer by the fact that often I meet with friends who too are away from their families, for dinner either at their lodgings or in mine. Amongst these are two Winnipeg exchange teachers and students from the University of Manitoba, and other Canadians. We all get together as a group quite often, as a matter of fact, and really enjoy those times a lot, getting and discussing news from friends we have in common "back home".

Paris as a city is really beautiful, absolutely startling in parts. I'm thinking, specifically of the expansive avenues and Boulevards which appear to be several driveways running parallel, with trees and lawns separating them and are after all one and the same avenue! Now I not only need my glasses to see someone across the street, I need binoculars! Of course there are also the little streets like alleys where you can take the hand of the person on the other side.

The most striking thing in Paris is the change of atmosphere you experience going from one section of the city to another. In the "chic" quarters, for example around the Champs Elysées or around Place de l'Opera one sees beautifully-dressed

women, lavish stores and window displays (the gown displays are out of this world), beautiful restaurants, everything fashionable and up to date. Whereas in the Latin Quarter one sees nothing but extremely shabbily dressed people, many of them of course Bohemians who simply are not interested in the material world in that way; one book shop after another with their stalls out on the sidewalks: cafés filled with bearded or long-haired artists and students; shady looking Moroccan peddlers with rugs, trying to sell their wares, exhibits of painting by aspiring young painters out on the sidewalks; odd musician beggars playing their accordions, flutes or fiddles; people dressed in their respective national costumes of which many are Oriental or Indian. I find this the most fascinating quarter—it's there you find such odd and sympathetic "club-café" where the same people come every night, some to play chess in a corner, others to read poetry aloud together, still others to just sit back and reflect all evening over a glass or cup of something comforting. One encounters a lot of this unhurried spirit here, especially in warmer weather, when many pass the time on the benches found everywhere along the sidewalks, either meditating or talking together by the hour, some sketching or painting very quietly.

Everywhere in Paris you find the famous "kiosk", stalls vending newspapers, magazines and books of every description and language. Without too much exaggeration, I can say these are located every few yards, along the sidewalk of a block. Then there are just as many quaint little flower stalls which sell violets, narcissus, carnations and roses all the year round—one of the many delightful charms of Paris.

I could talk about the underground world of Paris, the metro, where you find book stalls, and vendors of every imaginable thing, from flowers to man's ties, and where a notorious part of the population, the "clochards" or tramps, spends most of their time, because it is warm underground. They are people who have "resigned from society" for one reason or another and what is most amazing and in fact admirable, is that the government has had certain metro stations kept open during the night expressly for them—quite an unusual gesture of helpfulness for these people who choose to live that way. Then there are of course, a countless number of beggars many of whom are old crippled women.

There is the bus system of transportation which is more expensive usually but on sunny days it is pleasant to treat oneself by taking the bus and leaning over the open back section to look at Paris whizzing by: Frenchmen in their tams (yes, they really do wear tams!) the fashionable ladies and their funny looking dogs! (they are fanatics when it comes to dogs!), all the little shops each specializing in a certain product, gloves, or laces, or materials, and all the famous squares and palaces and cathedrals and monuments!

French people are generally very lively and talkative, with energetic and nervous motions, I find. They are easily excitable one with another and just as soon amiable once again! It's absolutely hilarious for example to hear the great shouting quarrels when an incident occurs between two motorists (which is often, the traffic is so chaotic) or still better—between a bus driver and motorist. They let off steam, at the least provocation and just as soon, its dying away in grumbling murmurs as they go their respective ways. At the same time the French

have such "gentile" formalities in greetings or salutations and introductions for example. There is the eternal hand-shaking amongst all age groups at every encounter and leave-taking, plus a kiss or two on each cheek amongst family members and good friends, even between the men members. It still amuses me to see little six or seven year old school pals greeting each other on a corner and shaking hands like two little old men! In class we promptly shake hands and greet our professor first on entering and directly afterwards make the whole tour of the class greeting each "class mate" individually! The same when taking leave! The formality of being called "Mademoiselle" instead of the first name even by young men of the same age has a certain charm. It makes one feel "special" somehow.

French people and probably Europeans in general, are far more frank about mundane, unromantic bodily matters, to a point of great amusement at times for us foreigners not used to it! Their attitude is far more frank and sensible than ours even though at times it borders on the unesthetic!

Heavens, I could talk still longer about my miscellaneous activities: having gone to the famous **Folies Bergeres** (couldn't be in Paris and not have gone once anyway); the famous **Circe d' Hiver**; the odd cabaret or night club or best of all, the odd dinners I have been invited for in most beautiful restaurants each with new distinctive features and atmosphere but all with most amazing waiters, real masters of their art! For dining in France really is an art, the delicious French cuisine, the manner of serving it, and the leisurely, gracious fashion of parttaking of it, something that has really appealed to me, I must say.

Frenchmen like to sit back and think about and make observations about life in general often, so what better time than meal times? I think we could learn a thing or two on this point! We always seem pressed for time in America, don't we? Frenchmen have just as much to do but they make time for the really important part of living. I think this is true generally, anyway.

At any rate, I am enjoying Paris more and more in every way and for that reason I hope to stay another year. There is so much here to learn and after nearly five months here, I can see that I could spend several winters and still not get around to taking in all there is. The first winter one actually just gets to know what's happening here—the second winter all the preliminary general confusion is over with and one gets ten times more accomplished. I have heard this opinion from others and I imagine it is not far from the truth.

I feel very happy to be here at last and the fact that I am here in a position to be able to take full advantage of this richly cultural life I owe to all of you, my kind friends who helped me so generously through the Icelandic Canadian Scholarship Fund.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you: The Icelandic Canadian club, the First Federated church, the Icel. Celebration committee, the Icelandic National League, and its chapter 'Frón', the First Lutheran church, the Jon Sigurdson chapter I. O.D.E., the Scandinavian Male Voice Choir, my old Daniel McIntyre Grads' Choir, the out-of-town friends, and all other friends that have been so good to me.

I am looking forward to playing for

you when I come home, all the wonderful new works I am learning. And with that goal in mind and with renewed enthusiasm and inspiration for my studies, I close this letter with loving greetings to you all.

Thora Solveig Asgeirson

★

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The Icelandic Canadian gratefully acknowledges periodicals received from the University of Iceland. These include: The Year Book of the University for 1951; The publication of the Students' Association, (Stúdentaritíð) and a brochure containing the discourse of Einar Arnórsson on the all-important question of the ancient Icelandic Manuscripts (Handritamál-ið).

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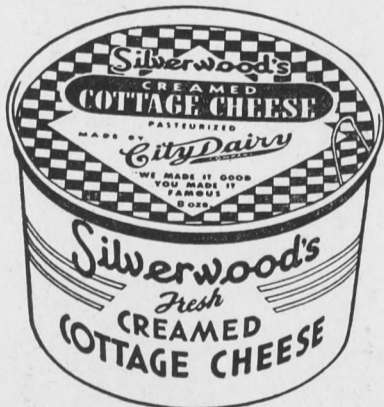
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